

# **Jeremiah Lesson 6**

**Jeremiah 21:1 – 29:32**

# Ask God to Intervene

- Jeremiah 21
- Zedekiah Asks Jeremiah to Ask God to Intervene and Deliver Jerusalem From the Babylonians
- We Can Date This Chapter to Sometime During the Jerusalem Siege (588-586 BC)
- Zedekiah Believes That Jeremiah is a True Prophet of God, At This Moment
- Zedekiah Has Forgotten or Ignored Jeremiah's Previous Oracles About the Babylonians

# Ask God to Intervene

- Perhaps Zedekiah Hoped for the Same Salvation That Hezekiah Received From the Assyrians
- One Difference: Hezekiah Prayed for Deliverance; Zedekiah Did Not
- What is God's Answer?
  - God Himself Will Fight Against You
  - Nebuchadnezzar Will Show No Mercy
- God Offers Judah a Choice: Choose Life in Babylon or Choose Death in Judah
- Matthew 7:13-14

# Oracles About the Kings of Judah

- Jeremiah 22; The Kings Between Josiah and Zedekiah
- Jehoahaz/Shallum, Son of Josiah
- Reigned For 3 Months Before Being Deported to Egypt, Where He Died
- A Pro-Jehoahaz Party in Judah Pinned False Hopes on His Return From Egyptian Exile; False Prophets May Have Fanned These Flames
- Jeremiah 22:12 Quashes This False Hope: “He Shall Never See This Land Again”

# Oracles About the Kings of Judah

- Jeremiah 22; The Kings Between Josiah and Zedekiah
- Jehoiakim/Eliakim, Son of Josiah
- Reigned For 11 Years
- God Contrasted Jehoiakim With His Father
- Josiah Was Righteous and Just; He Judged the Cause of the Poor and Needy Fairly
- Jehoiakim was Unrighteous and Unjust; Made the People Serve Him Without Wages; Shed Innocent Blood; Practiced Oppression and Violence

# Oracles About the Kings of Judah

- All of Jerusalem and Judah Mourned the Untimely Death of Josiah
- Jeremiah Even Uttered a Lament for Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:25)
- No One Would Weep for Jehoiakim; He Would Not Be Buried Like a King
- His Body Would Be Dumped Outside the City Gate, Like a Dead Donkey (Jeremiah 36:30)
- The Biblical Texts About Jehoiakim's Death Are Difficult to Harmonize; Nevertheless, His Life Did Not End Happily

# Oracles About the Kings of Judah

- Jeremiah 22; The Kings Between Josiah and Zedekiah
- Jehoiachin/Coniah/Jeconiah, Son of Jehoiakim
- Reigned 3 Months Before Being Deported With His Mother and Others to Babylon
- Nebuchadnezzar Put His Uncle, Mattaniah, On the Throne and Changed His Name to Zedekiah
- Jehoiachin is Called Childless Because None of His Children Would Succeed Him on the Throne of David (Jeremiah 22:30)



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# The Visions of the Figs

- Jeremiah 24
- After Jehoiachin Was Taken Into Babylonian Exile
- A Basket of Good Figs; A Basket of Bad, Inedible Figs
- The Good Figs = The Exiles Recently Transported to Babylon (2 Kings 24:14-16)
- Jeremiah 24:6-7
- The People Whom God Promises to Restore to the Promised Land in 70 Years (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

# The Visions of the Figs

- What About the Rotten Figs?
- The Bad Figs = Zedekiah, His Officials, the Remaining Poor, and Exiles in Egypt
- Jeremiah 24:9
- Does This Chapter Give Us Some Concern?
- Why Did the Group of Exiles With Jehoiachin Deserve Favor as Opposed to the Poor Left Behind?
- Answer: Exodus 33:19

# The Temple Sermon's After-Effects

- Jeremiah 26
- The Priests, the False Prophets, the People and the Officials of Judah Declare Jeremiah Deserves a Death Sentence
- Jeremiah's Response (Jeremiah 26:12-15)
- The Accusers Relent
- Some Elders Speak Up For Jeremiah
- Remember Micah and Hezekiah?
- God is With Jeremiah; Ahikam Protected Jeremiah
- Uriah Was Not So Lucky

# Jeremiah's Yoke

- Jeremiah 27
- Jeremiah, Make a Yoke and Wear It
- Jeremiah to Send a Message to the Envoys of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon
- Every Nation Must Put Its Neck Under the Yoke of Nebuchadnezzar or Be Punished Like Judah
- Any Nation That Serves the Babylonians God Will Leave On Its Own Land to Work It and Dwell There

# Jeremiah's Yoke

- The Power of Nebuchadnezzar and His Successors Over These Foreign Nations is Time Limited (Daniel 5)
- Do Not Listen to Prophets, Diviners, Dreamers, Fortune-Tellers, or Sorcerers Who Say, “You Will Not Serve the King of Babylon”. They Lie.
- Judah: Do Not Listen to Prophets Who Say the Temple Vessels Will Soon Return to Babylon. This is a Lie.
- The Remaining Temple Vessels Will Also Soon Go to Babylon Until God Restores Them to Jerusalem



Jeremiah's Yoke

# Hananiah, A False Prophet

- Jeremiah 28
- Hananiah's Message:
  - God Had Broken the Yoke of Nebuchadnezzar
  - In 2 Years, the Temple Vessels Would Return to Jerusalem
  - God Would Bring Jehoiachin and His Fellow Exiles Back to Jerusalem
- Jeremiah's Message:
  - Amen! May Your Words Come to Pass
  - Any Prophet Who Prophesies Peace and That Peace Comes to Pass is Truly a Prophet Sent By God



Jeremiah and Hananiah



# Hananiah, A False Prophet

- Hananiah Broke Jeremiah's Yoke as a Symbolic Act of What God Would Do
- God Sent Jeremiah to Hananiah With These Words:
  - The Yoke You Broke Has Been Replaced By Bars of Iron
  - All These Nations Will Now Serve Nebuchadnezzar
  - God Has Not Sent You
  - You Have Made the People Trust in a Lie
  - This Year You Shall Die
- 2 Months Later, Hananiah Died

# Other False Prophets

- Jeremiah 29
- False Prophets in Babylon
- God Dealt Harshly with Ahab and Zedekiah; False Prophets As Well as Adulterers; Roasted Alive By Nebuchadnezzar
- Shemaiah Urged Officials in Jerusalem to Imprison Jeremiah as a Madman
- God Declared Shemaiah Would Die Childless in Babylon For His False Words

## Jeremiah

### Lesson 6: Jeremiah 21:1 – 29:32

- Jeremiah 21 is a judgment oracle against the leaders of Judah.
  - The chapter opens with King Zedekiah of Judah sending Pashhur, the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah.
  - Note: this is not the same Pashhur of Jeremiah 20.
  - Zedekiah wants to know if Jeremiah will ask God to intervene and deliver Judah from the Babylonians, who are at the gates of Jerusalem.
  - 2 Chronicles 36:13 reminds us that Zedekiah, who had been installed as king by Nebuchadnezzar, had rebelled against him after 3 years. Using this passage, we can date Jeremiah 21 sometime during the 3-year siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (588-586 BC).
  - The fact that Zedekiah has asked Jeremiah for help indicates that the king believes that Jeremiah is a true prophet of God (at this moment), whose job it was, among other jobs, to intervene with God on behalf of the people.
  - Zedekiah has clearly forgotten or ignored all of Jeremiah's previous oracles about the coming destruction at the hand of the Babylonians.
  - Perhaps Zedekiah was hoping for the same miraculous salvation that Hezekiah had received when the Assyrians had surrounded Jerusalem. There is one significant difference however: Hezekiah worshipped God and prayed for deliverance, but Zedekiah did neither.
  - How does God answer this request?
  - Your own weapons will be used against you. God himself will fight against you "with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath." Pestilence and famine will follow the sword. Nebuchadnezzar will show the people of Judah no mercy. Nebuchadnezzar will conquer Jerusalem and destroy it with fire.

- God then offers the people of Judah a choice of life or death, much as Moses did in Deuteronomy 30: 11-20 (Choose life by obeying God. Choose death by disobeying God.). In the text of Jeremiah 21, obeying God is no longer an option. The choices are stay in Jerusalem and die or surrender to the Babylonians and live under their authority.
- We can link these choices to those of Jesus in Matthew 7: 13-14:
  - Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.
- Jeremiah 22 contains oracles concerning the kings of Judah.
  - As we have already noted, the chapters in Jeremiah are not in chronological order.
  - These oracles deal with the kings between Josiah and Zedekiah.
  - The first oracle deals with Shallum, son of Josiah, also called Jehoahaz. He reigned for only 3 months before being deported to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco where he subsequently died.
  - There may have been a pro-Jehoahaz party in Judah that pinned its hopes on Jehoahaz's return from Egyptian exile. Perhaps some of the false prophets fanned the flames of this false hope. Jeremiah puts the quash on this false hope. Jeremiah 22: 12 says "and he shall never see this land again."
  - After Pharaoh Neco deposed Jehoahaz, he put his brother Jehoiakim (also called Eliakim) on the throne. Jehoakim reigned for 11 years and died in Jerusalem.
  - God contrasted Jehoakim with his father Josiah, beginning in Jeremiah 22:13.
  - Josiah was just and righteous. He judged the cause of the poor and needy fairly.
  - Jehoiakim, on the other hand, was unrighteous and unjust. He made the people serve him without wages while he focused on building a spacious house out of cedar. Further, he shed innocent blood and practiced oppression and violence.
  - All of Jerusalem and Judah mourned the untimely death of Josiah. 2 Chronicles 35:25 records that Jeremiah uttered a lament for Josiah. In contrast, no one would weep when Jehoiakim died, nor would he be buried like a king. His body would be dragged and dumped outside the city gates of Jerusalem, unceremoniously, as one would discard a dead donkey.

- Jeremiah 36:30 records the following about his burial:
  - Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night.
- The circumstances surrounding the death of Jehoiakim, viewed across the various Biblical texts, are difficult to harmonize. 2 Chronicles 36:6 records that Nebuchadnezzar bound him in chains and took him to Babylon, whereas 2 Kings 24:6 suggests that he died in Jerusalem. Regardless of his death location, his life did not have a happy conclusion.
- Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin (also called Coniah or Jeconiah) reigned only 3 months before being deported with his mother to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar then put his uncle Mattaniah on the throne of Judah as his vassal and changed his name to Zedekiah.
- Jeremiah 22:30 calls Jehoiachin "childless" because none of his children would succeed him on the throne of David.
- Jeremiah 24 records another vision which God gave to Jeremiah. This vision took place after Jehoiachin was taken into Babylonian exile.
  - God showed Jeremiah 2 baskets of figs placed before the Temple. God asked Jeremiah to describe the figs. One basket of figs was very good. The second basket of figs were so bad that they were inedible.
  - God then compares the good basket of figs to those exiles (including Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and Daniel) who had recently been transported to Babylon. 2 Kings 24:14-16 records the following information about these exiles:
    - He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land. <sup>15</sup> And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>16</sup> And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the metal workers, 1,000, all of them strong and fit for war.

- God declares the following about these people in Jeremiah 24:6-7:
  - I will set my eyes on them for 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 pluck them up. <sup>7</sup> I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.
  - Notice the use of the terms “build up, tear down, plant, and pluck” which are the same as those used in Jeremiah’s calling in Jeremiah 1.
- These are the people whom God promises to bring back to the Promised Land after 70 years of Babylonian exile, per Jeremiah 29:10-14.
- But what about the basket of rotten figs? They, including Zedekiah, his officials, the remaining poor in the land, and a group of exiles in Egypt would become “reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places where I shall drive them.” (Jeremiah 24:9)
- Those remaining would suffer ultimate destruction by sword, famine, and pestilence.
- It is not clear when people from Judah fled to Egypt. These could have been pro-Egyptian sympathizers who fled there when Jehoahaz was taken there in 609 BC. Or, these could be people who fled when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah circa 598 BC.
- We might view this chapter with some concern. What did the group of exiles with Jehoiachin do to deserve God’s favor as opposed to the poor left behind, unwanted by Nebuchadnezzar? This question can best be answered with Exodus 33:19:
  - And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
- Jeremiah 26 describes the events which transpired after Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon, which we studied in Jeremiah 7.
  - The priests, the prophets (false prophets), the people, and the officials of Judah declared that Jeremiah’s words made him subject to a death sentence because he had prophesied against Jerusalem and the Temple.

- How does Jeremiah respond?
  - The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the words you have heard. <sup>13</sup> Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. <sup>14</sup> But as for me, behold, I am in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. <sup>15</sup> Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the LORD sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.” Jeremiah 26:12-15
- These words must have set the people back somewhat because they back off calling for Jeremiah’s death.
- Some of the elders speak up and remind everyone that the Prophet Micah, who prophesied at the time of King Hezekiah of Judah, was not put to death even though he prophesied that God would make Jerusalem a heap of ruins. There is a big difference: Hezekiah repented; Jehoiakim did not.
- God was with Jeremiah, as he had promised him more than once, and Ahikam protected Jeremiah from harm. Ahikam and his father were officials who supported Josiah’s religious reforms.
- Uriah, another prophet of the Lord, was not so lucky. He prophesied similar words like those of Jeremiah. When King Jehoiakim heard the words, the king wanted to put Uriah to death. Uriah fled to Egypt, but King Jehoiakim sent me to Egypt to find Uriah and bring him back to Judah. Jehoiakim killed Uriah by the sword and dumped his body in a burial place for common people.
- In Jeremiah 27, God instructs Jeremiah to make straps and yoke bars and wear them around his neck.
  - Jeremiah is to send a message to the envoys of the nations of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon who had come to Zedekiah’s court in Judah.
  - What was the message?
  - God has put all the lands of Judah and these nations into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Every nation must put its neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar or be punished with sword, famine, and pestilence. Any nation that serves the Babylonians God will leave on its own land to work it and dwell there.

- This chapter also notes that the power of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors over these foreign nations is time limited. In fact, Daniel 5 records that Belshazzar was the last Babylonian king. He was killed and Darius the Mede received his kingdom.
- Jeremiah's message also included an instruction not to listen to prophets, diviners, dreamers, fortune-tellers, or sorcerers who say, "You will not serve the king of Babylon." These words are a lie.
- Jeremiah adds a special message for Judah: "Do not listen to prophets who tell you the Temple vessels will soon return from Babylon." This is also a lie. Not only that, but any remaining vessels will also soon go to Babylon and remain there until God visits them in Babylon and restores them to Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah 28 records that the false prophet Hananiah did not get Jeremiah's message.
  - Hananiah said his message from God said:
    - God had broken the yoke of the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar.
    - In 2 years, God would return the Temple vessels to Jerusalem.
    - God would bring back Jehoiachin and his fellow exiles from Babylon.
  - Jeremiah replied, "Amen! May your words come to pass." And "Oh, by the way, any prophet who prophesies peace and that peace comes to pass is truly a prophet sent by God."
  - Hananiah broke the yoke on Jeremiah's neck as a symbolic act of what God would do, as conveyed to Hananiah.
  - Sometime after Hananiah had broken Jeremiah's yoke, God sent Jeremiah to Hananiah with these words:
    - "The yoke you broke has now been replaced by bars of iron."
    - "All of these nations will now serve Nebuchadnezzar."
    - "God has not sent you and you have made the people trust in a lie."
    - "This year you shall die."
  - 2 months later, Hananiah died.



- You studied Jeremiah 29 and the letter Jeremiah sent to the Babylonian exiles with directions for and words of hope for the exiles.
  - In this same chapter, we see the short story of other false prophets who were prophesying to the exiles in Babylon.
  - God dealt harshly with them. Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, were delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who had them roasted alive in the fire. In addition to being false prophets, these men committed adultery.
  - Shemaiah of Nehelam had written letters back to Jerusalem, urging officials and priests there to imprison Jeremiah, claiming he was a madman.
  - God declared the Shemaiah would die childless in Babylon for his false words.

## Jeremiah

### Lesson 6: Jeremiah 21:1 – 29:32

#### **Jeremiah Opposes Judah's Kings (21:1-23:8)**

1. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (597-586 BC), asks Jeremiah to inquire of Yahweh, perhaps in 588 BC, when he refused to pay tribute to Babylon; 21:1-2. Yahweh warns that he himself will fight against Judah, and those who survive will be taken into exile (21:3-7). Those who stay in the city will die, while those who surrender to the Chaldeans will live (21:8-10). In contrast to King Zedekiah's behavior, how were the kings of God's people supposed to behave (21:11-22:10)?
  - Do justice and righteousness (Jer 21:11; Jer 22:3)
  - Deliver one who has been robbed from his oppressor (Jer 21:11)
  - Do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow (Jer 22:3)
  - Do not shed innocent blood (Jer 22:3)
  - Obey these words (Jer 22:4)
2. The leaders of God's people are frequently called shepherds. According to Jeremiah 23:1-2, what were the shepherds in his day doing? Look at Ezekiel 34:1-20 to see what God says about these same shepherds. In John 10:1-18 Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd; what does Jesus do, and do differently, that makes him the Good Shepherd?
  - They have scattered the flock and driven them away (Jeremiah 3:2)
  - They have not attended to the flock (Jeremiah 3:2)
  - They did evil deeds (Jeremiah 3:2)
  
  - Feeding themselves instead of feeding their sheep (Ezk 34: 2)
  - Did not strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, brought back the strays, seek the lost (Ezk 34:4)
  - Ruled them with force and harshness (Ezk 34:4)
  - The Sheep were scattered all over the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them. (Ezk 34:6)
  
  - The Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10:3)
  - The Good Shepherd is the door into the sheepfold. If anyone enters by him, he will be saved. He will have life and have it abundantly. (Jn 10: 7-10)
  - The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. (Jn 10:11)

- The sheep know the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:14)
  - The Good Shepherd will bring other sheep that are not of this fold. (Jn 10:16)
  - There will be one flock and one shepherd (Jn 10:16)
3. Yahweh promises to “raise up for David a righteous Branch” to rule over and save God’s people; he will be called “the Lord is our righteousness” (23:5-8). According to 1 Corinthians 1:30, how is this passage fulfilled? Based on Romans 5:12-21, how did that fulfillment take place?
- “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a **righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.** <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: The LORD is our righteousness.’ <sup>7</sup> “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ <sup>8</sup> but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.” Jeremiah 23:5-8
  - And because of him you are in **Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,** 1 Corinthians 1:30
  - Jesus, the son of God, was full of righteousness and he redeemed his people by his death on the cross.
  - But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. <sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:15-21
  - Because of one man’s trespass (Adam), death came to all men. Because of Jesus’ death on the cross (one act of righteousness), there is justification and the free gift of righteousness for all who believe in Jesus Christ. Adam was disobedient. Christ was fully obedient, even to death on the cross, bearing all the sins of mankind.

### **Jeremiah Opposes False Prophets (23:9-40)**

4. Prophets were supposed to preach God's covenant and make accurate predictions (Deut. 13:1-11; 18:15-22). But Jeremiah was forced to contend with false prophets. What does he observe about these false prophets (Jer 23:9-15). What is God's perspective on them (23:16-32)?
- A false prophet will entice you to serve other gods. (Deut 13:2) Such a false prophet shall be put to death. (Deut 13:5)
  - All the Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, will have no portion or inheritance with Israel (no tribal land to inherit). (Deut 18:1)
  - All the Levitical priests will eat the Lord's food offerings as their inheritance. The Lord is their inheritance. (Deut 18: 1-2)
  - I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. (Deut 18:18-19)
  - A prophet who presumes to speak a word in God's name which God has not commanded him to speak shall be put to death. (Deut 18:20)
  - If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and what he says does not come to pass, then the word was not from the Lord; the prophet has spoken presumptuously but you don't need to be afraid of him. (Deut 18:22)
  
  - The prophet and the priest are ungodly; even in the Temple God has found their evil. (Jer 23:11)
  - The prophets prophesied by Baal and led the people of Israel astray. (Jer 23:13)
  - The prophets in Jerusalem commit adultery, lie, and strengthen the hands of evildoers. (Jer 23:14)
  
  - God will feed them bitter food and poisoned water. (Jer 23:15)
  - God said, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you and fill you with vain hopes." (Jer 23:16)
  - These prophets speak visions from their own minds, not from the Lord. (Jer 23:16)
  - These prophets say over and over again, "No disaster shall befall you." (Jer 23:17)
  - God did not send these prophets or speak to them. (Jer 23:21)
  - If these prophets had stood in God's council, they would have proclaimed God's words to the people and turned them from their evil ways. (Jer 23:22)
  - God sees and hears these false prophets and knows what is in their hearts. (Jer 23:24-25)
  - These prophets have attempted to make the people forget God's name. (Jer 23:27)
  - These prophets prophesy lying dreams. (Jer 23: 32)

### **Jeremiah Opposes the People (24:1-25:38)**

5. In 597 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took a second wave of exiles to Babylon, including many of the elite from Judah (King Jeconiah and the prophet Ezekiel among them), and installed Zedekiah as king of Judah. Soon after, God shows Jeremiah a vision of 2 baskets of figs (Jer 24:1-10). The basket of bad figs represents the officials of Judah remaining in the land, who will experience God's judgment. The basket of good figs represents those exiled to Babylon, whom God will one day bring back to the land of Israel. What does God promise to those he will bring back to the land? Where have we seen the language of verse 6 earlier in Jeremiah?
- Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. <sup>6</sup> I will set my eyes on them for 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 pluck them up.** <sup>7</sup> I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart. Jeremiah 24:5-7
  - See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, **to build and to plant.**” Jeremiah 1:10
  - Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; **I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.** <sup>15</sup> “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. <sup>16</sup> And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the LORD.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. <sup>17</sup> At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. <sup>18</sup> In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage. Jeremiah 3:14-18

6. In Jeremiah 24:7 God promises, “I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord.” What does it mean for God to give someone a new heart? Consult Deuteronomy 30:6 and Ezekiel 36: 26-28 to fill out your answer.
- And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Deuteronomy 30:6
  - And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup> You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. <sup>2</sup> Ezekiel 36:26-29
  - God will do a heart transplant. No more will his people have a heart of stone that rejects the Lord and refuses to follow his commands. Those with a new heart will love the Lord and obey his commands.
7. In Jeremiah 25 the scene shifts back to 605 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar took his first wave of exiles to Babylon (including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; see Dan 1:1-5). Jeremiah has been preaching his message of repentance and impending judgment, yet Judah has failed to listen (Jer 25:1-7). According to 25:8-14, what will God do to Babylon? When will this take place? What reason does 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 give for the specific amount of time designated by Jeremiah?
- Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, <sup>9</sup> behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction**, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. <sup>10</sup> **Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness**, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. <sup>11</sup> **This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.** <sup>12</sup> **Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation**, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, **making the land an everlasting waste.** <sup>13</sup> I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. <sup>14</sup> **For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.**” Jeremiah 25:8-14

- He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons **until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia**,<sup>21</sup> to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. 2 Chronicles 36:20-21

8. The message of God's impending judgment continues in Jeremiah 25:15-27. What symbols does God use to portray his judgment? What light does this passage shed on Jesus' agony in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46)? What was Jesus contemplating as he prayed there?

- The cup of wine of wrath (Jer 25:15)
- A sword (Jer 25: 29)
- A tempest (Jer 25:32)
- My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Matthew 26:39
- My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Matthew 26:42
- For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Jesus was asking God if it is possible to avoid drinking the cup of God's wrath, which was God's punishment for all the sins of mankind. But he obeyed God completely and suffered on the cross with all of the sins of mankind upon him as well as separation from his Father.

### **Jeremiah Opposes False Belief (26:1-29:32)**

9. Jeremiah 26 flashes back to 609 BC, after the death of King Josiah and the 3-month reign of his son Jehoahaz. The new king is Jehoiakim (609-598), another son of Josiah. Yahweh instructs Jeremiah to stand in the court of the temple and announce Yahweh's impending judgment if Judah does not repent (Jer 26:1-6). The leaders threaten to kill Jeremiah (vv. 7-11) but eventually change their mind (vs. 12-14).

Jeremiah 27 flashes forward to the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah in 597 BC. Yahweh commands Jeremiah to illustrate submission to Nebuchadnezzar with yoke bars, warning that Judah will not escape his rule and exile. Several years later (594/593 BC) the false prophet Hananiah responds (ch. 28), claiming that Yahweh will break the yoke of Babylon, return the temple vessels, and bring back the exiles. He symbolizes this by breaking Jeremiah's yoke bars. Soon afterward, Yahweh reassures Jeremiah that Hananiah's words are not from him, promising that Hananiah will die within the year – which happens just as Yahweh foretold.

In chapter 29, the scene shifts back to 597, when Babylon took the second wave of exiles (including the prophet Ezekiel). Some (e.g., Daniel and his friends) had already been in Babylon for 8 years, while others had been there for just a few months. God inspires Jeremiah to write a letter instructing the exiles on how to conduct themselves in Babylon. What instructions does God give to the exiles (29:1-9)?

- **Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup> Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. <sup>8</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, <sup>9</sup> for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD. Jeremiah 29:5-9**

10. What does Yahweh promise to do for the exiles (29:10-14)?

- **“For thus says the LORD: **When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.**”**

## **Personal Implications**

11. Gospel Glimpses

### **Seeking the Lord Wholeheartedly**

- if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9
- let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22



- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

### **God Works for the Good of His People**

- In Genesis, we read the story of Joseph and his brothers, who sold him into slavery because they were jealous of him. Later, after Pharaoh had put Joseph in charge of all of Egypt and Joseph had been reunited with his brothers, they expressed regret for what they had done. Joseph said these famous words, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” Genesis 50:20
- God knows what is best for us in the long term, even if we cannot see what He is doing across time and place.
- Jesus’ brother James reminds us of the following, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

## **12. Whole-Bible Connections**

### **A Righteous Branch**

- There are multiple prophecies about God promising a ruler from the line of David.
- Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. <sup>9</sup> Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? <sup>10</sup> The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Genesis 49:8-10
- For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7

- Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and **Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,** <sup>3</sup> and **Judah** the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4</sup> and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup> and **Jesse the father of David the king.** **And David was the father of Solomon** by the wife of Uriah, <sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, <sup>8</sup> and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, <sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, <sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, <sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> and **Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.** Matthew 1:2-16

### The Cup of God's Wrath

- For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. Psalms 75:8
- Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations. Ezekiel 7:8
- to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10
- And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Revelation 14:9-11

- Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” Revelation 16:1

### 13. Theological Soundings

#### **True Versus False Prophecy**

- I spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions, and through the prophets gave parables. Hosea 12:10
- The book of Acts records that the people of Berea tested everything they heard from Paul against the Scriptures.
- The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. <sup>11</sup> Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17:10-11
- For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21
- But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 Peter 2:1

#### **The Word of the Lord**

- Recall from Genesis that the earth, the heavens, and everything in them were created by the Word of God.
- For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. Psalms 33:9
- If God created with a word, he can destroy with a word also.

### 14. Jeremiah 21:1 – 29:32 in total

- Jeremiah had to contend with so many different groups who opposed him. In addition to the sinful behavior he saw everywhere, how disheartened Jeremiah must have been to witness false shepherds and false prophets who lead the people astray with works and words which did not come from God.