



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Jeremiah

Days 226-240 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 226	Jeremiah 1-3	☐
Day 227	Jeremiah 4-6	☐
Day 228	Jeremiah 7-9	☐
Day 229	Jeremiah 10-13	☐
Day 230	Jeremiah 14-17	☐
Day 231	Jeremiah 18-22	☐
Day 232	Jeremiah 23-25	☐
Day 233	Jeremiah 26-29	☐
Day 234	Jeremiah 30-32	☐
Day 235	Jeremiah 33-36	☐
Day 236	Jeremiah 37-40	☐
Day 237	Jeremiah 41-45	☐
Day 238	Jeremiah 46-48	☐
Day 239	Jeremiah 49-50	☐
Day 240	Jeremiah 51-52	☐

Welcome to the Book of Jeremiah!

Jeremiah (“exalted of the Lord”) was a priest and prophet during the final days of the Kingdom of Judah. His ministry was to warn of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylon and prepare the people for the coming Captivity. He is often called “the weeping prophet” because his message largely went unheeded and he saw the devastation brought by God’s judgment.

A few quick facts about Jeremiah:

- The author is Jeremiah. It could be that his scribe Baruch was responsible for compiling the contents of this book.
- This book was completed around 560 B.C., though most of it takes place between 630 and 586 B.C. To put this in context, Jeremiah’s ministry would roughly begin in II Kings 22 and II Chronicles 34 and end in II Kings 25 and II Chronicles 36.
- The key verse is Jeremiah 7:23 – “But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.”
- A brief outline:
 - Jeremiah’s call and commission – Chapter 1
 - Prophecies concerning Judah – Chapters 2-45
 - Prophecies concerning other nations – Chapters 46-51
 - Historical postscript – Chapter 52
- Key chapters:
 - Chapter 1 – Jeremiah’s Call
 - Chapter 31 – The New Covenant

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah is called to be a prophet.

vs. 1-3 – Jeremiah is a young priest that lived in Anathoth (“answers to prayer”), about 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem. His first prophecies began in 628 B.C. and his last were in 586 B.C., though the historical information in the last chapter of this book looks beyond these prophecies.

vs. 4-10 – God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet, and he balks because of his youth. God reassures him that he had been chosen before his birth for this task. God assures Jeremiah that it would be His message that Jeremiah gave. The scope and magnitude of this message is seen in vs. 10.

vs. 11-16 – God begins with two small visions for Jeremiah. The first is of a branch of an almond tree. The blooms of an almond tree were the sign that winter had ended and spring had begun, which here is used to illustrate that the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecies would soon come to pass. The second is of a boiling pot that faces north, which means it was ready to pour out toward the south. This is used to signify the coming Babylonian invasion under Nebuchadnezzar.

vs. 17-19 – Jeremiah is encouraged to speak his message boldly because God would protect him.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter begins and indictment against Israel for forsaking God.

vs. 1-3 – God speaks of His love and kindness toward Israel in the past.

vs. 4-11 – Israel's unfaithfulness to God is recalled. This was the fault of the people and not of God. God had always been faithful to them. They are challenged to find a nation that had been less faithful to their idols than they had been to the True God.

vs. 12-18 – Israel had forsaken God, pictured as a fountain of life-giving water. They had trusted in their own strength, pictured as leaky reservoirs, which could never satisfy. This brought destruction by the hands of the Assyrians (the young lions of vs. 15) and the Egyptians (the cities of vs. 16, see II Kings 23:29). They had not learned their lesson and now sought aid from Egypt (Sihor means "black" and refers to the Nile, see Isaiah 23:3) and Assyria.

vs. 19-30 – The indictment against Israel continues. God had done all He could to bless and nurture them, but they refused to be tamed. Even chastisement could not move their hearts back to God.

vs. 31-37 – The behavior of Israel is incomprehensible to God. They had forgotten Him and all He had done. They claimed they had not sinned when the blood stains were on their clothes. They would face the consequences of their actions and be ashamed of their choices.

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter Judah is called to repent before judgment comes.

vs. 1-5 – Though Israel had been unfaithful to God as an unfaithful wife to her husband, yet God still sought to bring her back. Reminds you Hosea, doesn't it? God had tried to turn their hearts back to Him, but they remained proud and rebellious.

vs. 6-11 – Judah is called to remember the unfaithfulness of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They had turned from God to idols and refused to repent. God had destroyed them in judgment. Judah was following in her footsteps. Israel, which had already been judged, is seen as less deserving of judgment than Judah is. Simply put, Judah should have known better.

vs. 12-18 – The return of the Northern Kingdom from Captivity is foreseen. Israel had been taken away by the Assyrians almost a century before this. About 60 years from this time Judah would be taken by the Babylonians. 70 years beyond that, the remnant of the Jews would be allowed to return to begin to rebuild Jerusalem. The old division would be gone. This sees that historical return but also a future restoration in the Millennial Kingdom as Christ is reigning in Jerusalem.

vs. 19-25 – Both of the restorations of Israel, whether historical from the Babylonian Captivity or future when they embrace the Messiah at the close of the Tribulation, are based on their repentance. When they finally humble themselves and turn to God, He responds and restores His blessing upon them.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 226

The first chapter of Jeremiah is special to me. I surrendered to preach when I was about 10 years old. Our church would let the young preachers speak occasionally during our midweek services. I would get very nervous about standing up in front of everyone, as most inexperienced preachers do regardless of age. Somehow I discovered this chapter. I took great comfort in Jeremiah's call and the way God both encouraged him and eased him into his ministry with a couple of simple visions. I would read this chapter over and over before I would preach to help with my stage fright. You may not be called to preach, but the same caring God has a need for you to meet. You may not feel adequate or ready, but take courage from young Jeremiah. If God has called you, God will use you. It is about His strength and not ours.

Hymn for Day 226

Today's hymn, often titled "Pardoning Love", is from the pen of Anne Steele. It echoes the call for backslidden in Jeremiah 3 to return to God and find forgiveness.

*How oft, alas, this wretched heart
Has wander'd from the Lord!
How oft my roving thoughts depart,
Forgetful of his word!*

*Yet sov'reign mercy calls, Return:
Dear Lord, and may I come!
My vile ingratitude I mourn;
Oh take the wand'rer home.*

*And canst thou, wilt thou yet forgive,
And bid my crimes remove?
And shall a pardon'd rebel live
To speak thy wond'rous love?*

*Almighty grace, thy healing pow'r
How glorious, how divine!
That can to life and bliss restore
So vile a heart as mine.*

*Thy pardoning love, so free, so sweet,
Dear Saviour, I adore;
Oh, keep me at thy sacred feet,
And let me rove no more.*

Chapter 4 Notes

In this chapter the coming judgment against Judah is foretold.

vs. 1-4 – The repentance that the Lord desired is described. It is a complete change of heart, which is the meaning of vs. 4. This type of repentance was the only thing that could turn away the coming judgment.

vs. 5-18 – The coming Babylonian invasion, about 40 years in the future, is foretold. Judah is told to prepare for the war that is coming, but their resistance will be futile. If they would not humble themselves before God, God would humble them in judgment. His tool would be the Gentile nations that would assemble and besiege the fortified cities of Judah until they fell.

vs. 19-22 – The heartbreak of both Jeremiah and God at what is coming. Divine judgment is not meted out without the heart of God being grieved.

vs. 23-31 – The desolation after the coming judgment is pictured. This is poetic, artistic language used to describe the severity of what was coming. The mourning of the surviving remnant is seen in vs. 31.

Chapter 5 Notes

In this chapter the reason for the coming judgment is revealed.

vs. 1-9 – The sad condition of Judah. Even though they claimed to serve God, there was no proof in their actions to back up that claim. From the least to the greatest, society was thoroughly corrupt and judgment was required.

vs. 10-18 – This section begins and ends with a promise that God would not fully destroy Israel in the judgment. The people, however, had refused to heed His warnings. They had called the truth of God a lie. The Babylonians would come as judgment against this people.

vs. 19-29 – The people were so deluded that they could not understand why God would judge them, so God tells them exactly why. Their sins had brought judgment against them. Their utter corruption and rejection of the truth forced God to act.

vs. 30-31 – The prophets lied and the nation's leaders conspired with them, yet the people were happy in their sinful condition.

Chapter 6 Notes

In this chapter the coming judgment is against seen.

vs. 1-8 – The faithful in Jerusalem, represented by a faithful remnant from Benjamin, are warned to flee the doomed city. The Babylonians would invade from the north, so they are told to flee southward to Tekoa (“pitching of tents”, see II Samuel 14 and Amos 1:1), about 12 miles away, and Bethhaccerem (“house of the vineyard”), about 6 miles away. The siege of Jerusalem is then described.

vs. 9-21 – Judah is called to repent, but they are too far gone to heed the warning. They kept going down the path that led to destruction. The famous phrase quoted by Patrick Henry, among others, is in vs. 14: “Peace, peace, when there is no peace”. Also, vs. 16 is a favorite of many who try to call others to return to the “old paths” that too many have forsaken.

vs. 22-26 – A vivid description of the danger that was coming with the Babylonian advance.

vs. 27-30 – Jeremiah is encouraged in his sad duty to proclaim the downfall of Judah. The people are compared to metals. Silver was the most common precious metal used in trade (modern coinage had not quite caught on yet in this area). The silver of the people was worthless as it was imperfect, alloyed with lesser metals that make it of no value or use. It is a sad picture because the true value of the nation was wasted because they refused to serve God purely.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 227

I want to highlight Jeremiah's call to seek the "old paths" in Jeremiah 6:16. "Old" does not instantly make anything better, but neither does "new". The emphasis here is on the people returning to the better ways of their forefathers when they faithfully served God. They had drifted off that course, just as our nation today has. I feel Jeremiah's pain as he calls people to walk in the old paths, because they reject them as readily today as they did in his day. It is not just the world, as many branches of Christianity have given in to the idea that anything old just will not work in our modern day. They have jettisoned our heritage of hymns, vocabulary, and practice. They mock those that hold those dear. I fear that, just like in Jeremiah's day, the new paths are leading many astray without them even realizing it.

Hymn for Day 227

Our hymn today is "O God, Who Metest In Thine Hand", written in Richard Frederick Littledale. Its few appearances in hymnals are usually in groupings of hymns "For Those At Sea". The opening verse is clearly based on Jeremiah 5:22.

*O God, who metest in Thine hand
The waters of the mighty sea,
And barrest ocean with the sand
By Thy perpetual decree:*

*What time the floods lift up their voice
And break in anger on the shore,
When deep to deep calls with the noise
Of waterspouts and billows' roar;*

*When they who to the sea go down,
And in the waters ply their toil,
Are lifted on the surge's crown,
And plunged where seething eddies boil;*

*Rule then, O Lord, the ocean's wrath,
And bind the tempest with Thy will;
Tread, as of old, the water's path
And speak Thy bidding, Peace, be still.*

*So with Thy mercies ever new
Thy servants set from peril free,
And bring them, Pilot wise and true,
Within the port where they would be.*

Chapter 7 Notes

In this chapter the religious practices of Judah are condemned.

vs. 1-15 – The people are warned to not take their position with God for granted. They felt secure because they had the Temple in Jerusalem. They thought God would never let it fall or be destroyed. God reminds them in vs. 12 that the Tabernacle at Shiloh was attacked by the Philistines and at least partially destroyed in I Samuel 4:10. This is not explicitly stated in the text, but the clues are numerous such as this mention of it. We note also the phrase “den of robbers” in vs. 11 that is also used by Christ in Matthew 21:13.

vs. 16-20 – Jeremiah is instructed to not make intercession for the people because they are too far gone. They were absorbed so much in idolatry that only judgment would turn their hearts.

vs. 21-28 – God declares that the sacrifices made by the people are no what He desires. He reminds them that it was faith in Him that brought Israel out of Egypt and the sacrifices came later. The people need to repent if they would avoid judgment, but they are too proud to bend the knee.

vs. 29-34 – Judah was being called to repent for their idolatrous ways. Did we not just prior to this see that they were offering sacrifices to Jehovah? Why are they now offering them to false gods? They were doing it the whole time! Whatever worship they offered toward God was as a polytheist. Jehovah was just another one of the many gods on their shelf. But God did not desire to be just *a* god. He wanted to be *the* God of the Jews. Their infidelity to Him would bring harsh judgment. Tophet (“place of burning”) and Hinnom (“lamentation”) were sites outside Jerusalem dedicated to pagan worship.

Chapter 8 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah weeps over the refusal of the people to repent.

vs. 1-3 – The coming judgment is pictured. The dead kings that led the people to that doom have their graves desecrated. The gods they had served had not power to save them.

vs. 4-12 – The pride of the people had caused them to forsake God's truth for their own wisdom. In doing so, they did not have the sense left to see what was coming. Judgment was coming.

vs. 13-17 – The coming judgment is described.

vs. 18-22 – Jeremiah laments the refusal of the people to repent. Time was running out and so was hope that the judgment would be avoided. He compares their condition to being sick and refusing the offered medicine in vs. 22. Gilead was famed for a medicine made from resin obtained from a local shrub.

Chapter 9 Notes

In this chapter we see the need for, and lack of, repentance.

vs. 1-9 – Jeremiah has had enough of dealing with the rebellious people. He wants to run away and just give up on them. God responds with the promise that their sins would be surely judged.

vs. 10-16 – The scope of the coming judgment is seen and its cause. The cause is in vs. 13-14. They had forsaken God and His Law.

vs. 17-22 – Here is an allusion to Jewish funeral customs. There existed among them what are commonly classified as professional mourners. These were paid to add to the mourning of a family and community. It was thought that the greater the number of mourners the greater the status of the deceased. These types of mourners are told to start preparing for the funerals and laments to come after judgment. We also note the description of these women in vs. 17 as “cunning”, which likely indicates they were idolators. It is fitting that these would mourn because it was they who caused the judgment and they who would fall in it.

vs. 23-26 – Judah would not be the only nation to feel the wrath of Babylon. These all boasted that they could defeat and withstand what was coming. They were wrong. The only hope for survival was by trusting in God and not man’s strength. Note how Israel is lumped in with the foreign, “uncircumcised” nations, They may have been physically circumcised as sign of their heritage from Abraham, but they were not spiritually circumcised. God cared not for their physical state, but their spiritual state.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 228

I While looking at Jeremiah Chapter 7, we noted that Judah was trying to serve God and idols at the same time. We often think of this as a situation where you are either serving God or you or not, so finding a mixture of truth and error may surprise some. It is very difficult for the modern mind to comprehend the ancient polytheist mindset. In their minds, every god had some use and you sort of worshipped whatever claimed to help with your need. It was easy, then, for many to embrace God or even Christ, but not exclusively. This is the importance of the First Commandment in Exodus 20:3. We are not called to worship God as one of many other deities, but to worship Him exclusively. Even in the modern world, people will willingly say they accept Christ, but not exclusively. Some will even claim to accept Christ through multiple traditions. None of these ideas are Biblical. The call of God is to trust in Him solely and completely.

Hymn for Day 228

Our hymn today by Anne Steele first appeared under the title “Christ the Physician of Souls” in 1760. It draws on the theme of Jeremiah 8:22 to point us to Christ for our salvation.

*Deep are the wounds which sin hath made;
Where shall the sinner find a cure?
In vain, alas, is nature's aid,
The work exceeds all nature's pow'r.*

*Sin like a raging fever reigns,
With fatal strength in every part;
The dire contagion fills the veins,
And spreads its poison to the heart.*

*And can no sov'reign balm be found,
And is no kind physician nigh,
To ease the pain, and heal the wound,
Ere life and hope forever fly?*

*There is a great physician near,
Look up. O fainting soul, and live;
See, in his heav'nly smiles appear
Such ease as nature cannot give!*

*See, in the Saviour's dying blood
Life, health, and bliss abundant flow!
'Tis only this dear, sacred flood
Can ease thy pain, and heal thy woe.*

*Sin throws in vain its pointed dart,
For here a sov'reign cure is found;
A cordial for a fainting heart,
A balm for ev'ry painful wound.*

Chapter 10 Notes

In this chapter the idolatry of Judah is condemned.

vs. 1-5 – It has been common practice in pagan worship to seek guidance from observing astronomical phenomena. God takes aim at this practice and the overall absurdity of idol worship.

vs. 6-18 – The mighty God is contrasted against lifeless idols. There is simply no comparison! The people would be judged for worshipping false gods that had no power to deliver them from God's wrath.

vs. 19-25 – Jeremiah places himself in the desolation that follows God's judgment. He prays that God would use the inevitable judgment to purge but not destroy Israel. He then prays that God's fury be poured out on the Gentiles that afflict Israel.

Chapter 11 Notes

In this chapter Israel is charged with breaking their covenant with God.

vs. 1-17 – Israel had broken their covenant with God to serve Him. In passages such as Exodus 24 they had solemnly promised to obey and honor God, but they soon turned to idols. They would face judgment for failing to keep their word. In vs. 14 it is shown that they had crossed the line of no return and only judgment could bring them back.

vs. 18-23 – Jeremiah's colleagues had tried to silence his message of approaching judgment. God exhorts Jeremiah to continue speaking the truth because those men would be consumed in the coming judgment.

Chapter 12 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah wrestles with the prosperity of the wicked.

vs. 1-4 – Jeremiah is bothered by the age-old question: how can the wicked prosper? The cause of his frustration is the opposition we saw in Jeremiah 11:18-23. The Bible deals with this question in many places because it is something we definitely struggle with. My favorite answer to this problem is Psalm 73. Jeremiah prays for swift judgment against the wicked.

vs. 5-13 – God first responds that the opposition will be stronger in the future. He then speaks of the judgment, not in the future tense, but in the past. They had crossed the line of no return.

vs. 14-17 – God addresses the nations surrounding Judah. They too will be caught up in the coming judgment. To them is offered the same mercy as offered to the Jews: they must repent of their idolatry and turn to the Lord.

Chapter 13 Notes

In this chapter the coming judgment is illustrated.

vs. 1-11 – Jeremiah uses an object lesson. He gets a fine linen girdle and wears it. He was not to wash it. God then tells him to take it and bury it in the banks of the Euphrates River. He retrieves it after quite some time, and it is decayed too much to be of any use. The girdle represents Israel and its close relation to God. Their pride and sin soiled them until they were beyond redemption. The appearance of the Euphrates links this to Babylon and the coming judgment.

vs. 12-14 – Jeremiah uses a second object lesson. He uses bottles of wine as a comparison to the intoxicated, sinful state of Judah. The bottles were destroyed just as the judgment would destroy Judah.

vs. 15-21 – The leaders of Judah are called to repent before judgment falls. They had been entrusted with care of God's people. God now calls them to account for the state of the nation.

vs. 22-27 – The fact that the leaders did not recognize their sinful state shows why judgment must come. They are too far gone and cannot change who they are.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 229

Sometimes we are tempted to say, “How could God allow things to get so bad?” That places the blame in the wrong place. We are the ones who go astray. God has given us a free will, but with that free will comes the responsibility for our actions. God will execute justice in His time. That is not necessarily according to our schedule.

Hymn for Day 229

Our hymn today appears under the heading “Sanctified Affliction” and was written by Charles Wesley. It reflects the righteous judgment of God that Jeremiah wrestled with in Jeremiah 12:1.

*Glory to thee, thou righteous God;
Righteous, yet kind to me;
For under thy paternal rod,
Paternal love I see.*

*Though humbled in the lowest deep,
Thy gracious hand I bless;
And, thinking of thy love, I weep
For my unfaithfulness.*

*Thou dost in tenderness chastise,
And graciously reprove:
My father!--all within me cries--
Thy ways are truth and love.*

Chapter 14 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah prays for God's mercy on His people.

vs. 1-6 – The exact timing of this drought is debated, but God often withheld rain as a means of getting Israel's attention (II Chronicles 7:13-14). The sad effects of this are seen on people and animals.

vs. 7-9 – Jeremiah offers an intercessory prayer for the nation. He acknowledges the sins that have brought them under God's chastisement. He calls on God to not give up on His people.

vs. 10-12 – God responds to Jeremiah's prayer by telling him that the time for prayers and fasts are past. God would not hear any intercession on behalf of the people who are past the point of no return.

vs. 13-18 – Jeremiah complains about the many prophets that prophesy the opposite of what God was telling him. God reassures him that they are false prophets and that they will fall in the coming judgment.

vs. 19-22 – The broken-hearted Jeremiah implores God to not forsake and destroy His people in judgment.

Chapter 15 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah continues to wrestle with the coming judgment.

vs. 1-9 – God will not back down from the coming judgment. We note that He would not stop even if two of the mightiest intercessors in history, Moses and Samuel, would pray for mercy for Israel. See II Kings 21:11-16 for Manasseh's role in dragging the nation deeper into sin. This section closes with a poignant picture of the widows and mothers mourning their losses in the coming judgment.

vs. 10-14 – Jeremiah complains that he has done no wrong to have to endure the opposition he faced in his mission to proclaim the coming judgment. He is, in fact, speaking on behalf of the righteous remnant in the land. God responds by addressing the remnant. There was hope beyond judgment in the restoration after the Babylonian Captivity. The faithful remnant would however still have to go through perilous times.

vs. 15-21 – Jeremiah speaks again in the place of the faithful remnant. The case made in vs. 10 is enlarged. Why would the righteous suffer in the coming judgment? God will be with them through what was to come. He would use their righteousness as a witness against the evil of the day. One day, they would be proven to be right as the faithful are allowed to return and the wicked are consumed in judgment.

Chapter 16 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah testifies of the coming judgment through remaining unmarried.

vs. 1-13 – Jeremiah was instructed to not take a wife or have children as another object lesson against the coming judgment. This spared them the awful fate that was coming. He is also instructed to not join in joyous celebrations because the day was coming when there would be no joy. The people would see his actions and inquire about them. He could then tell them of the judgment and its cause.

vs. 14-21 – The restoration of Israel after the Babylonian Captivity is promised. God would surely punish the nation and disperse its people throughout foreign lands, but they would be gathered and brought back to the Promised Land. Again, the full fulfillment of this has yet to take place. It will happen in the End Times.

Chapter 17 Notes

In this chapter the divide between the righteous and wicked in the land is highlighted.

vs. 1-4 – The sin of idolatry was not just a passing fad in Judah. It was ingrained in the heart of the people like a carved image. They were too far gone to repent, and their hearts had been remolded in judgment.

vs. 5-11 – The two paths from Psalm 1 are shown in Jeremiah's day. The wicked that trusted in man to deliver them from the coming judgment would be ashamed and destroyed. The righteous that trusted in God would continue in God's blessing, even through judgment! While it was difficult to determine who was truly righteous among those who covered their sinful hearts with a wrapping of obedience, God knew who they really were.

vs. 12-18 – Jeremiah speaks again in place of the faithful remnant. He acknowledges the greatness of God and the sins of the nation. He prays for healing and salvation even as his message is mocked by unbelievers. He calls for God to enact His justice against the evil of the people. This is a great development from the complaints he has given before this!

vs. 19-27 – Jeremiah rebukes the nation publicly for not keeping the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8). The idea of the Sabbath will be developed further and be a very important part of the length of the Babylonian Captivity (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10; II Chronicles 36:20-21; Daniel 9:2)

Devotional Thoughts for Day 230

Take Jeremiah 17:9 to heart. Literally. We are told so very often that we should “follow our hearts”. This is terribly advice. Our hearts are depraved and selfish. We should tune our hearts to God’s eternal truth and rein in its sinful tendencies.

Hymn for Day 230

Our hymn today first appeared under the heading “The Evil Heart”. It was written by Benjamin Beddome in 1787 and is a prayer for God to aid in guiding our wayward hearts.

*Astonish'd and distress'd,
I turn mine eyes within;
My heart with loads of guilt oprest,
The seat of every sin.*

*What crowds of evil thoughts,
What vile affections there!
Distrust, presumption, artful guile,
Pride, envy, slavish fear.*

*Almighty King of saints
These tyrant lusts subdue;
Expel the darkness of my mind,
And all my powers renew.*

*This done, my cheerful voice
Shall loud hosannas raise;
My soul shall glow with gratitude,
My lips proclaim thy praise.*

Chapter 18 Notes

In this chapter God's sovereignty over men is compared to a potter and his clay.

vs. 1-17 – God illustrates His sovereignty over Israel through a potter working with clay. The clay had no power to shape itself. It was completely at the mercy of the potter's will. So it is with the nations (and individuals) under God's guiding hand. Some very important truths are in vs. 7-8. While God is sovereign, His will is moved by the actions of men. God can pronounce judgment and it will surely come. But if the target of the that judgment repents, God will withhold that sure judgment. This is not inconsistency on God's part. It is part of His sovereignty. He can and will do as He pleases.

vs. 18-23 – Jeremiah faces more opposition from the wicked. They attack him with their words, which as we all know are far more powerful than any sword or spear. He responds with an imprecatory prayer, calling for God to judge them.

Chapter 19 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah uses another object lesson to show the coming judgment.

vs. 1-13 – Jeremiah is commanded to use yet another object lesson. This time he takes an earthen vessel and gathers the leaders of Judah. He leads them to the valley of the son of Hinnom. He repeats the message from Jeremiah 7:32-33, that this valley that was a place of idol worship would become a place of slaughter. This is emphasized as he casts down the vessel and breaks it to illustrate the violent judgment that was coming.

vs. 14-15 – Jeremiah follows the message of the broken vessel by proclaiming the coming judgment while in the Temple courtyard.

Chapter 20 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah is persecuted and frustrated in his mission.

vs. 1-6 – A high-ranking official, possibly the same position as the captain of the Temple in Acts 4:1, named Pashur (“liberation”) hears Jeremiah’s message from Chapter 19:14-15. He arrests Jeremiah, beats him, and places him in stocks near the Temple to be ridiculed by the people. When released the next day, Jeremiah tells Pashur that God had renamed him Magormissabib (“terror on every side”), signifying the judgment to come upon him and the people.

vs. 7-18 – In one of the most moving passages ever composed, Jeremiah reveals the turmoil within his heart. He blames God for burdening him with a message that has brought such harsh opposition. He tried to withhold his terrible message, but the burden burned within him. God brings him from the depths of despair to singing God’s praises. But from this mountaintop of joy, he rapidly descends back into despair beginning in vs. 14

Chapter 21 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah responds to Zedekiah's inquiry.

vs. 1-2 – This chapter jumps ahead in time from the settings of its surrounding chapters. It is placed here thematically, not chronologically. It would correlate to II Kings 25:1-2 and it takes place in 587 B.C. as Nebuchadnezzar is besieging Jerusalem. King Zedekiah sends representatives (the Pashur here is not the same man as in the previous chapter) to enquire if the Lord will deliver them.

vs. 3-14 – The message Jeremiah gives is not the one Zedekiah desired. Judgment would surely come. The city would fall. The people would be killed or taken captive. Zedekiah would be captured.

Chapter 22 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah prophesied of the fates of the kings of Judah.

vs. 1-12 – Jeremiah preaches to the royal house of Judah. He calls upon them to lead the people in righteousness or judgment would come. The king here is Jehoahaz (reigned 3 months in 609 B.C.C, see II Kings 23:31-34 and II Chronicles 36:1-4), son of Josiah. He is here called Shallum (retribution) as an allusion to the short rule of Shallum, king of Israel, who only reigned one month (II Kings 15:13).

vs. 13-19 – This section is addressed to king Jehoiakim (reigned from 609-598 B.C.) He enriched himself and built his palace amid the decline of the nation. He is the only king who has not burial recorded (II Kings 24:6).

vs. 20-30 – This section is believed to address the three-month reign of Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:8-9, II Chronicles 36:9). He is called Coniah in vs. 24, which drops the part of the name that refers to God. His line is cursed in vs. 30 so that none of his descendants would be on the throne of David. Interestingly, he is in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:12 as a forefather of Joseph. This does not disqualify Christ from being Messiah, as Joseph is not His actual Father.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 231

The image of the potter and clay is a popular one in Christianity. It is reassuring that God is working His will in us. I think we often fail, though, to note that that clay has some role in its own shaping. We note In Jeremiah 18:4 that the initial design intended for the vessel could not be completed. The clay refused to take that shape. So the potter remakes it into something else. Yes, God is sovereign over all, but also man's actions can guide the hand of God. That is seen in these chapters as judgment was assured, but it was also promised that it would be withheld if the people repented.

Hymn for Day 231

Our hymn today is an anonymous text that first appeared in 1869 under the heading "Give Me Thy Heart".

*Take my heart, O Father! mold it
In obedience to thy will;
And, as ripening years unfold it,
Keep it true and child-like still.*

*Father, keep it pure and lowly,
Strong and brave, yet free from strife,
Turning from the paths unholy
Of a vain or sinful life.*

*Ever let thy might surround it;
Strengthen it with power divine,
Till thy cords of love have bound it,
Father, wholly unto thine.*

Chapter 23 Notes

In this chapter the leadership failure in Judah is contrasted to the glory of the coming Christ.

vs. 1-4 – The pastors (shepherds) here are the leaders of Israel. The comparison of leaders to shepherds is common, especially because of David. The leaders were driving the people toward judgment. God would spare a remnant of the people, but the leaders would be replaced.

vs. 5-8 – Jeremiah gives one of the most magnificent prophecies of Christ the Messiah and His Kingdom.

vs. 9-14 – The false prophets in Judah are compared to those of the Northern Kingdom before it fell. They and the priests are utterly corrupt.

vs. 15-32 – The righteous and holy God would pour His wrath on those that spoke falsely in His name.

vs. 33-40 – God's message to the people of Judah is that judgment is coming. Any prophet that said otherwise was not speaking the true revelation of God.

Chapter 24 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah receives a vision of two baskets of figs.

vs. 1-3 – This passage is connected to the taking of king Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) and others captive in II Kings 24:10-16. The vision that Jeremiah sees is of two baskets of figs, one with good figs and the other with bad figs.

vs. 4-10 – The explanation of the vision of the figs. The good figs are the faithful remnant that will return from captivity. The bad figs are the wicked that will be consumed in judgment, including king Zedekiah. Note in vs. 8 that some escaped the Babylonian assault by fleeing to Egypt.

Chapter 25 Notes

In this chapter the 70-year Babylonian Captivity is revealed.

vs. 1-7 – This prophecy came in 605 B.C. Jeremiah summarizes his ministry thus far in vs. 3 as being from 628 to 605 B.C. During this time the people had failed to heed the call to repent from the faithful prophets who tried in vain to turn the heart of the nation.

vs. 8-11 – The coming invasion by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar is seen. The important part of this prophecy is vs. 11 which gives the length of the Babylonian Captivity as 70 years.

vs. 12-14 – The fall of Babylon before the end of the 70-year captivity is announced.

vs. 15-29 – This passage deals primarily with the judgment of the nations through the conquests of Babylon. It could also have some hints of Armageddon as Christ judges the nations.

vs. 30-38 – The coming destruction of the conquests of Babylon.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 232

There is much wisdom in the comparison of leaders to shepherds. It is one of the most brilliant ideas that came from Jewish culture. Leaders should not simply drive people, but should nurture them and help them grow. Too many leaders, secular and sacred, today care only for what they get from people. A true shepherd of people invests in their followers and takes care of them.

Hymn for Day 232

Our hymn today is “Come, O Thou All-Victorious Lord” by Charles Wesley. Throughout these prophetic books and the various judgments that we see, God is always victorious in His dealing with man.

*Come, O thou all-victorious Lord,
Thy power to us make known:
Strike with the hammer of thy word,
And break these hearts of stone.*

*O that we all might now begin
Our foolishness to mourn;
And turn at once from every sin,
And to the Saviour turn.*

*Give us ourselves and thee to know
In this your gracious day;
Repentance unto life bestow,
And take our sins away.*

*Conclude us first of unbelief,
And freely then release;
Fill every soul with sacred grief,
And then with sacred peace.*

*Impoverish, Lord, and then relieve,
And then enrich the poor;
The knowledge of our sickness give,
The knowledge of our cure.*

*That blessed sense of guilt impart,
And then remove the load;
Trouble, and wash the troubled heart
In the atoning blood.*

*Our desperate state through sin declare,
And speak our sins forgiven:
By perfect holiness prepare,
And take us into heaven.*

Chapter 26 Notes

In this chapter there is fierce backlash against Jeremiah and Urijah for their prophecies.

vs. 1-6 – This section is connected to Jeremiah 7 and takes place in 608 B.C. Jeremiah here stands in the court of the Temple and proclaims the coming judgment and destruction of the Temple. He compares this to the Tabernacle being forsaken at Shiloh and the Philistine attack against it (see I Samuel 4).

vs. 7-11 – Jeremiah is apprehended by the Temple authorities, and they seek for his death because of his prophecy.

vs. 12-15 – Jeremiah offers his defense without backing down from his message. He warns that if he is killed, they will be guilty of killing an innocent man.

vs. 16-19 – The princes stand up for Jeremiah and recall a similar message from the prophet Micah over 100 years before this. The exact passage is Micah 3:12.

vs. 20-24 – Another faithful prophet named Urijah (“light of Jehovah”) is hunted down for his prophecies against Judah. He is martyred at the command of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is spared the same fate because of a powerful ally named Ahikam (“a brother who raises up”). We met Ahikam in II Kings 22:12-14 as one member of the company that consulted the prophetess Huldah. He is also the father of Gedaliah, who would serve as territorial governor under Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 40:5).

Chapter 27 Notes

In this chapter bondage to Babylon is seen through the sign of the yoke.

vs. 1-11 – This section occurred in 609 B.C., shortly before the previous chapter. Delegates from surrounding nations were gathering in Jerusalem, most likely to discuss resisting Babylon's growing power. Jeremiah takes yokes like oxen wore when they pulled a plow and gave them to the assembled delegates. The picture is that all these nations would be subjugated by Babylon.

vs. 12-22 - We jump here to 597 B.C. Why are these two prophecies linked if they occurred so far apart? It is because they are thematically linked. Jeremiah again appeals to the imagery of the yoke to show that Babylon would conquer Judah. Jeremiah appeals to the nation that they do not heed the false promises of peace from the lips of lying prophets. He also reveals that the Temple's treasures would be looted by the Babylonians.

Chapter 28 Notes

In this chapter a false prophet counters Jeremiah's prophecy.

vs. 1-11 – A false prophet named Hananiah (“gift of God”) proclaims publicly that through Babylon will be victorious over Judah they would return within two years. Jeremiah agrees that this will happen, but that time would tell which of them was correct on the timing. Hananiah doubled down on his claim by breaking the yoke Jeremiah was using as a sign like in the previous chapter

vs. 12-17 – Jeremiah receives a prophecy against Hananiah. It would not be wooden yoke that bound Judah, but one made of iron that would not so easily be broken. As further evidence against the false prophet, it is declared that he will die within two months. This happens as God said, fulfilling the command of Deuteronomy 18:19.

Chapter 29 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah sends a letter to the first captives in Babylon.

vs. 1-23 – Jeremiah sends a letter to the first captives taken to Babylon in II Kings 24:14 shortly before this time. The message is for those Jews in Babylon to settle in and live their lives as best they could in a foreign land. They were going to be there for 70 years before any returned to Judah. The purpose of this judgment was to purge idolatry from the people's hearts so they would seek the Lord. Any prophets that claimed otherwise were lying.

vs. 24-32 – Special attention is paid to the false prophet named Shemaiah ("heard by Jehovah"). He was in Babylon and had sent letters back to Judah telling people not to heed Jeremiah's warnings. God announces judgment upon the false prophet saying that his family would vanish in the captivity and not return.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 233

Context is key to understanding the Bible. It is very easy to take one verse, disconnect it from its surroundings, and change truth to error. This is what often happens with Jeremiah 29:11. It is presented as a promise that God wants to bless us all. In context, it is promising the Jews that there was good behind the coming judgment. That is not exactly the same as the way it is presented on coffee mugs and shirts. Yes, God wants to bless us, but sometimes that blessing comes in the form of a purging.

Hymn for Day 233

Today's hymn is "Child of Sin and Sorrow", written by Thomas Hastings in 1832. It is a call for the sinner to repent and turn to Christ.

*Child of sin and sorrow, filled with dismay,
Wait not for the morrow, yield thee today:
Heaven bids thee come, while yet there's room,
Child of sin and sorrow, hear and obey.*

*Child of sin and sorrow, why wilt thou die?
Come whilst thou can borrow help from on high:
Grieve not that love which, from above,
Child of sin and sorrow, would bring thee nigh.*

*Child of sin and sorrow, the moments glide,
Like the flitting arrow, or the rushing tide;
E'er time is o'er, heaven's grace implore;
Child of sin and sorrow, in Christ confide.*

*Child of sin and sorrow, cease now the tear;
Wait not for tomorrow, banish thy fear!
Christ now receives him who believes,
Child of sin and sorrow, be of good cheer!*

Chapter 30 Notes

In this chapter is a view of Israel's restoration in the End Times.

vs. 1-11 – Jeremiah is commanded to write his prophecy into a book so that it would be remembered for generations. He then speaks of the regathering of the Jews to the Promised Land. In part, this refers to hope of return beyond the Babylonian Captivity. However, as we continue reading this passage it becomes clearer that this has not yet been fulfilled in every detail. It points to the End Times. The “time of Jacob’s trouble” is the Tribulation. The reign of the Messiah is described in vs. 9.

vs. 12-17 – The deep sin of the Jews that led to the Captivity continues today. The promise of God is not that they will be cast out or replaced, but that they will be restored and healed. God is not finished with Israel.

vs. 18-24 – Here begins a description of the Millennial Kingdom. Christ conquers in vs. 23, and the blessings of the Kingdom are poured out on Israel.

Chapter 31 Notes

In this chapter we see the complete restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 1-9 – The full restoration of Israel is seen. This includes both divisions of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. We note here how carefully the old Northern Kingdom is remembered with references to Ephraim and Samaria. This points to the End Times as there is no historical fulfillment that fits this description.

vs. 10-14 – The great joy of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 15-21 – Matthew 2:17-18 quotes vs. 15 as a prophecy of Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents when he attempted to kill the Christ as an infant. That is not the only fulfillment of this passage. Rachel's children were Joseph and Benjamin, and Joseph's children were Ephraim and Manasseh. Those two tribes of Joseph were in the Northern Kingdom, which is finally and completely reunited with Judah in the End Times.

vs. 22-26 – The exaltation of Israel from a wayward daughter to a warrior queen under the Messiah. This allows for great prosperity and peace in the land.

vs. 27-30 – God's hand of judgment that was on Judah in Jeremiah's day will be replaced by His hand of blessing.

vs. 31-34 – The establishment of the New Covenant between God and Israel. The Old Covenant at Mt. Sinai looked forward to the Cross and this New Covenant looks back at it. See Hebrews 8:8-13 for a discussion of this topic.

vs. 35-40 – God assures us by His almighty power that He will establish Israel and build Jerusalem as a great capital. This is the promise of the Millennial Kingdom.

Chapter 32 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah buys a field as a sign of Israel's restoration after judgment.

vs. 1-5 – This chapter takes place in 587 B.C., only a year before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. Jeremiah has been imprisoned, which will be explained further in Chapter 37. Jeremiah's crime was his faithful prophecy of the coming fall of Jerusalem.

vs. 6-15 – God uses a real estate transaction as an object lesson. His nephew Hanameel ("whom God graciously gave") was selling his family field in their hometown of Anathoth. Jeremiah was the next of kin with the responsibility to redeem the land (Leviticus 25:25). The details of the transaction are fascinating. Note that the silver is weighted because there is no standard coinage in use at this time. The 17 shekels would be roughly \$500 today. Two records of the transactions are made. The purpose of one being sealed and the other not is a type of security mechanism. If someone produced a false copy of the deed it could be compared to the sealed copy. If these did not match, then the false copy was revealed. It was common in times of distress for ancient peoples to place valuable items in clay jars and bury them. This is the purpose of hiding away the records. It meant that there was hope beyond the Babylonian victory and that someone would return and claim the land title. Also noteworthy in this passage is the first appearance of Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch ("blessed").

vs. 16-25 – Jeremiah prays for understanding regarding the real estate transaction God had just commanded him to make. He lays out the history of God's dealings with Israel as a foundation of hope that God had a purpose in this.

vs. 26-44 – God responds to Jeremiah's prayer. First, He declares the coming judgment and fall of Jerusalem. Second, He gives the reason for it as the great sin of the people. Third, He promises that there will be a return from the coming captivity.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 234

Jeremiah is certainly not the only person to suffer in their service to God. One of the beautiful aspects of this book is that we not only see his boldness of proclaiming an unpopular message, but also the humanity of the man who was persecuted and attacked for his faithful stand. We read often of the times he would go to the Lord and cry out for strength and understanding. God knew the great burden Jeremiah carried and patiently encourages him. When we obey God in faith, He will not abandon. Look to Him to uphold you or to pick you up when your strength runs out. He knows our frailty and readily supplies His great power to lift us up.

Hymn for Day 234

Our hymn today is “We Sing the Majesty of God”, written by Benjamin Beddome in 1818. It connects to our reading today through the praise of God in creation in Jeremiah 32:17.

*We sing the majesty of God,
Whose wisdom spread the heavens abroad;
To him creation owes its birth,
His mighty arm sustains the earth.*

*Should angels or archangels dare,
With him their glories to compare,
He soon in wrath would make them know,
Himself how high, themselves how low.*

*His essence fills unbounded space,
His ways our highest thought surpass;
In worlds unnumbered and unknown,
He reigns unrivaled and alone.*

*The evening shade, the morning light,
The sun by day and stars by night,
Unite their voices to proclaim,
The awful grandeur of his name.*

*He sees our griefs with pitying eyes,
His liberal hand our need supplies;*

*From him full streams of mercy flow,
To cheer this gloomy vale below.*

*Thou God of grace and matchless power,
With reverence we thy name adore;
To thee our grateful songs we raise,
Though feeble are our notes of praise.*

Chapter 33 Notes

In this chapter God reveals more of the Messiah and Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 1-5 – God calls for Jeremiah to pray for further revelation of what was coming for Judah.

vs. 6-13 – The full restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom is described.

vs. 14-18 – Christ is revealed as the Righteous Branch of David, ruling in the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 19-26 – God emphasis that through His faithfulness all will come to pass as promised. Christ the Messiah will come. The Jews will not be forsaken.

Chapter 34 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah prophesies against the king and people as the end nears.

vs. 1-7 – Jeremiah personally announces Zedekiah's fate. The fall of Jerusalem was coming soon. It is interesting to note the details of vs. 3 that say Zedekiah would see Nebuchadnezzar. According to II Kings 25:7 his eyes were put out shortly after this meeting.

vs. 8-22 – It seems that Zedekiah emancipated the Jewish slaves during the siege of Jerusalem. The thought was probably that doing so might improve their lot in the coming captivity, since they would be treated differently than mere slaves. The people did not follow this command. God rebukes them and declares that this sin would be rewarded with judgment.

Chapter 35 Notes

In this chapter the faithfulness of the Rechabites is used to reprove Israel's unfaithfulness.

vs. 1-11 – We jump back to 605 B.C. here. The Rechabites were not Israelites but were Kenites who worshipped the true God and dwelt among the Israelites (Judges 1:16, etc.). These were descended from Jehonadab who aided Jehu in II Kings 10:15-17. This family had followed a strict lifestyle in their service to God by not drinking wine, building houses, or planting crops. They lived much like Arabian nomads. In this section, Jeremiah calls them to the Temple and offers them wine, which they refuse to drink because of their customs.

vs. 12-19 – The faithfulness of the Rechabites is contrasted to unfaithfulness of Judah. The former were careful to maintain their obedience to their forefather, while the latter willingly turned away from the commands God had given to them. The faithfulness of the Rechabites is blessed with a divine promise that their family would not be destroyed in the coming judgment. I Chronicles 2:55 shows that they were among those that returned to the Promised Land after the Babylonian Captivity.

Chapter 36 Notes

In this chapter Jehoiakim destroys a scroll of Jeremiah's message.

vs. 1-3 – Jeremiah works with his scribe Baruch to create a scroll containing his prophecies against Judah and Israel.

vs. 4-8 – The reason Jeremiah was not allowed to go to the Temple is not given. It is likely due to ceremonial impurity or perhaps he was hiding for his own safety. This is not related to his later imprisonment. Baruch takes the scroll and reads its contents in the Temple courtyard. This must have been a reoccurring act because time passes and Baruch continues to read in public.

vs. 9-20 – This is about a year later when Jehoiakim proclaimed a fast. Baruch reads Jeremiah's scroll in the Temple and the message affects Michaiah ("who is like God?"). Michaiah tells the princes of the message he heard, and they bring Baruch to read it before them. Fearing Jehoiakim's reaction, they tell Baruch to have Jeremiah hide as they made a report of the message to the king.

vs. 21-26 – Jehoiakim has Jeremiah's scroll read to him. Before it finished, he cut it up and burned it. The princes protest to no avail. The king's heart was too hard to repent. He orders the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch.

vs. 27-32 – God tells Jeremiah to create another roll with the original message and more added to it. Because of Jehoiakim's disregard for God's message, his line is cursed so that none of his descendants would sit on the throne.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 235

When I check our mailbox, if I receive mail from someone I know I will keep it and open it. If the mail is from someone I don't know it will likely end up in the trash. It is sad to see Jehoiakim do this same thing with God's Word. He did not recognize that it was God's message and not Jeremiah's. It is not our responsibility to find which parts of the Bible we should follow and then discard the rest. We are called to accept it all and obey it.

Hymn for Day 235

Today's hymn is "'Twas by an Order From the Lord" by Isaac Watts. We read today of Jeremiah's message being written down by Baruch. This hymn praises God for His written word.

*'Twas by an order from the Lord,
The ancient prophets spoke His Word;
His Spirit did their tongues inspire,
And warm'd their hearts with heav'nly fire.*

*The works and wonders which they wrought
Confirmed the messages they brought:
The prophet's pen succeeds His breath,
To save the holy words from death.*

*Great God! mine eyes with pleasure look
Upon Thy precious holy book;
There my Redeemer's face I see,
And read His name who died for me.*

*Let the false raptures of the mind
Be lost, and vanish in the wind;
Here I can fix my hope secure:
This is Thy word, and must endure.*

Chapter 37 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah is imprisoned.

vs. 1-10 – The year is 588 B.C., and the wicked Zedekiah is on the throne. Babylon has besieged Jerusalem. Zedekiah is so desperate that he asks Jeremiah to pray for him and the nation. The army of Egypt had moved toward the relief of Jerusalem but would soon retreat. During this brief reprieve when it seemed there may be hope of escaping, Jeremiah enters and proclaims that the Babylonians would return and the city would fall.

vs. 11-21 – Jeremiah attempts to escape from Jerusalem but is arrested by Irijah (“seen by the Lord”). He is charged with attempting to defect over to the Babylonians. He is beaten and imprisoned. The king secretly inquires if he had a word from the Lord and Jeremiah responds with the same message that Babylon would conquer Judah. Jeremiah remains in prison through the rest of the siege.

Chapter 38 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah the prisoner prophesies of the fall of Jerusalem.

vs. 1-13 – This takes place even closer to end of the siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is targeted once again for his faithful witness of the coming defeat. Some of the princes gain permission to take him and put him in a makeshift dungeon. It is rightfully a cistern that had no water, only mud and mire. The intention is to leave Jeremiah there to die.

Ebedmelech (“servant of the king”) intervenes and with thirty men rescues Jeremiah. The prophet is not set at liberty but remains a prisoner.

vs. 14-28 – Zedekiah has a secret meeting with Jeremiah in desperate attempt to find a way to avoid the coming defeat. Jeremiah tells him that he should surrender and he and the city would be saved from some of the horrors that had been prophesied. The pride of Zedekiah will not allow him to do so. Instead, he would make a desperate flight to escape and would be captured (I Kings 25:5, Jeremiah 39:5). Jeremiah remains in prison until the fall of Jerusalem.

Chapter 39 Notes

In this chapter Jerusalem falls and God protects Jeremiah.

vs. 1-10 – Jerusalem falls in 586 B.C. on the 9th of Ab, a date that is infamous in Jewish history. Tradition says it is the same day that Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 A.D. Zedekiah makes an attempt to flee but is captured. The last thing he sees is the execution of his sons before his eyes are put out. Jerusalem was destroyed and the survivors are taken captive back to Babylon. The poor are left in the land under Babylonian supervision.

vs. 11-14 – Jeremiah is preserved through the fall of Jerusalem because he was a prisoner. The Babylonians rightfully assumed that if he was a prisoner he was not supportive of Zedekiah's rebellion, but also hearing of his favorable prophecies toward them surely gained him favor. Gedaliah ("God is my greatness") is made governor over the remaining Jews and Jeremiah is placed in his charge.

vs. 15-18 – God remembers the deeds of Edelmlech in aiding Jeremiah in the previous chapter and allows him to escape unscathed from the fall of Jerusalem.

Chapter 40 Notes

In this chapter we see the state of the Jews that remained in the land after the fall of Jerusalem.

vs. 1-6 – Jeremiah is given a choice of going to Babylon or remaining in Judah. He chooses to remain.

vs. 7-16 – Many Jews that had fled before the Babylonians arrived now return. Gedaliah seeks to have them settled and live peaceably in the land under Babylonian oversight. However, a conspiracy begins that will culminate in the next chapter. A man named Ishmael makes no secret of his intent to assassinate the newly appointed governor for working with the Babylonians. Gedaliah refuses to believe the reports concerning this.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 236

I am reminded in this passage of the great promise of Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good. It does not say that all things are good, but the overreaching arc of events bends toward good. We have seen Jeremiah's heart break many times at the persecution and opposition he faced. Surely he thought being a prisoner during the siege to be the lowest of all these that he had to endure. But God used this to Jeremiah's advantage. He was protected in the prison when the Babylonians swarmed into the city. The fact he was in prison for opposing the actions of the nobles worked so that the Babylonians looked on him favorably. We may not always understand why God leads us through the dark valleys we sometimes must enter, but we can be assured that the destination is worth it.

Hymn for Day 236

Our hymn today was written by William Bengo Collyer in 1812. It is titled "Return, O Wanderer, Return" and reflects Jeremiah's calls for repentance.

*Return, O wanderer, return,
And seek an injur'd Father's face;
Those warm desires that in thee burn
Were kindled by reclaiming grace.*

*Return, O wanderer, return,
And seek a Father's melting heart;
His pitying eyes thy grief discern,
His hand shall heal thine inward smart.*

*Return, O wanderer, return,
Thy Saviour bids thy spirit live;
Go to his bleeding feet, and learn
How freely Jesus can forgive.*

*Return, O wanderer, return,
And wipe away the falling tear:
'Tis God who says, "No longer mourn,"
'Tis mercy's voice invites thee near.*

Chapter 41 Notes

In this chapter Gedaliah is assassinated and the remaining Jews flee.

vs. 1-3 – This story continues from the previous chapter. Ishmael conspires against the Babylonian-appointed governor Gedaliah. Ishmael assassinates Gedaliah and kills those Jews that like him that were cooperating with the Babylonians.

vs. 4-18 – Jews from the old Northern Kingdom arrive in mourning over the fall of Jerusalem. Ishmael kills all but 10 who promise to reveal hidden caches of supplies. Johanan (“gift or grace of God”) pursues Ishmael as he flees to Ammon. The captives he took were rescued but Ishmael escaped. Fearing reprisal from the Babylonians, Johanan prepares to take the remaining Jews and flee to Egypt.

Chapter 42 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah warns the survivors to stay in the Promised Land.

vs. 1-6 – The surviving people ask Jeremiah to intercede with God for them, and he agrees to tell them what the Lord says, for good or bad.

vs. 7-22 – God answers the people 10 days later. If they would stay in the land, God would bless them. If they fled to Egypt, they would face judgment there. The people's hearts were already made up on going to Egypt.

Chapter 43 Notes

In this chapter Jeremiah is taken to Egypt.

vs. 1-7 – Jeremiah is again accused of betraying his people to the Babylonians. The people refuse to heed God's warning and flee to Egypt. Jeremiah is forced to go with them.

vs. 8-13 – Jeremiah proclaims in Egypt that Nebuchadnezzar would invade and conquer Egypt. This was fulfilled in 568 B.C. with the defeat of Pharaoh Amasis II.

Chapter 44 Notes

In this chapter the fate of the Jews in Egypt is sealed.

vs. 1-10 – Judgment had come upon the Jews because of their idolatry. Those that had escaped to Egypt failed to learn the lesson of from the fall of Jerusalem. They continued to worship idols so God would judge them.

vs. 11-14 – God declares that the Jews that had fled to Egypt would not escape His judgment.

vs. 15-19 – The Jews refuse to stop their idolatry. They pledge themselves to continue worshiping the “queen of heaven” because they wrongly believed it was this false deity that had blessed their nation. The exact deity is difficult to ascertain, but many ancient cultures worshipped some form of a moon goddess. This could be a form of Ishtar or Ashtoreth.

vs. 20-28 – God’s Word would be proven true. The Jews had sealed their fate by their own confession and their continuation in sin. God does allow for a small remnant to return to Judah, but the majority of those that fled to Egypt would die there.

vs. 29-30 – God gives a sign that the doom of the Jews in Egypt was sure. The current Pharaoh, known to history as Apries, would fall to his enemies. This was fulfilled in 570 B.C. when he was killed and supplanted by Amasis II.

Chapter 45 Notes

In this chapter Baruch is reprimanded for his pride.

vs. 1-5 – Here we jump back to 605 B.C. with events that relate to Jeremiah 36. Jeremiah sends a message to his scribe Baruch. It appears that Baruch had thought his service to Jeremiah would somehow be rewarded richly. He was wrong. God would bless him by allowing him to live.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 237

I believe that there are two ways to learn something: from your personal experience or by observing the experience of others. When I was growing up, I could either test the boundaries my parents set or I could observe my sister do the same. I could learn lessons without fear of being disciplined for it if I simply learned from watching my sister. The Jews in Egypt watched their nation be judged for its idolatry but failed to learn by observation. No, they had to learn the lesson firsthand. How much better would their fate be, and ours also, if we would simply take God at His word or at least learn from others' mistakes.

Hymn for Day 237

Our hymn today is "Treasure in Heaven", written by Philip Doddridge. There are practically no hymns based on today's reading, so I have chosen this one to reflect the attitude change Baruch needed in Jeremiah 45. We do not serve God for earthly riches, but we are promised unimaginable glories in Heaven.

*Yes, there are Joys that cannot die,
With GOD laid up in Store;
Treasure, beyond the changing Sky,
Brighter than Golden Ore.*

*The Seeds which Piety and Love
Have scatter'd here below,
In the fair, fertile Fields above,
To ample Harvests grow.*

*The Mite, my willing Hands can give,
At JESUS' Feet I lay;
Grace shall the humble Gift receive,
And Grace at large repay.*

Chapter 46 Notes

In this chapter are prophecies concerning two defeats of the Egyptians.

vs. 1-12 – Jeremiah prophesies of the Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. where the Egyptian army under Necho II and the remnants of the Assyrian empire were soundly defeated by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar (who was only a prince at this time). This defeat basically kept Egypt from interfering with Babylonian affairs.

vs. 13-26 – Since the previous prophecy in this chapter, Nabopolassar has died and Nebuchadnezzar inherited the throne. This prophecy concerns Nebuchadnezzar invading and defeating Egypt. This occurred in 568-567 B.C.

vs. 27-28 – Words of comfort to the Jews in captivity when Egypt is defeated. The mighty nations would fall but God would restore Israel.

Chapter 47 Notes

In this chapter are prophecies concerning the Philistines

vs. 1-7 – The prophesied defeat of the Philistines occurred in 604-603 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar invaded after they had rebelled against Babylon. The Philistines retained their identity in captivity for a while before fading away. The land was resettled by others.

Chapter 48 Notes

In this chapter are prophecies against Moab.

vs. 1-19 – Desolation and mourning would fill the cities of Moab when judgment came. Their god Chemosh could not protect them. Babylon would defeat them in 582 B.C. and take them captive.

vs. 20-46 – A description of the humiliation of Moab.

vs. 47 – Moabites returned to their ancestral territory under Cyrus the Great. By the time of the New Testament these people had lost their identity. However, God promises that they will be restored in the “latter days” of prophesy as allies of the Jews in the Millennial Kingdom.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 238

One of the reasons we can trust unfulfilled prophecy is because of fulfilled prophecy. Jeremiah spoke of events in the near future for him and we can see history play out exactly as he said. I like to think of prophecy as “pre-written history”. Be sure that every word and every detail of this will occur exactly as God said.

Hymn for Day 238

Our hymn today is “Peace, Troubled Soul”, written by Walter Shirley. Shirley was a friend of Whitefield and the Wesleys. As you can probably imagine, there are not many songs related to today’s reading. The reason I chose this one is because it mentions the balm of Gilead that is mentioned in Jeremiah 46:11.

*Peace, troubled soul, whose plaintive moan
Hath taught each scene the note of woe;
Cease thy complaint, suppress thy groan,
And let thy tears forget to flow;
Behold, the precious balm is found,
To lull thy pain, and heal thy wound.*

*Come, freely come, by sin oppressed;
On Jesus cast thy weighty load;
In Him thy refuge find, thy rest;
Trust in the mercy of thy God:
Thy God's thy Saviour--glorious word!
For ever love and praise the Lord.*

*As spring the winter--day, the night,
So peace thy gloom will chase away,
And smiling joy, a seraph bright,
Shall tend thy steps and near thee stay;
While glory weaves the immortal crown,
And waits to claim thee for her own.*

Chapter 49 Notes

In this chapter judgment against various nations is pronounced.

vs. 1-6 – The Ammonites were taken defeated and taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 582 B.C. They existed as a distinct nation in the days of the Roman Empire but eventually assimilated into surrounding peoples.

vs. 7-22 – Edom believed they were safe because of their fortified cities carved into the rock hills. Their pride and confidence would be turned to utter humiliation. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians defeated them in 582 B.C.

vs. 23-27 – Syria and its capital of Damascus fell to Babylon in 603 B.C.

vs. 28-33 – Kedar and Hazor were nations descended from Ishmael. Their territory was in Arabia. Their Bedouin-like lifestyle would not escape the notice of Babylon. They were defeated in 599 B.C.

vs. 34-39 – This section is from a later date of 597 B.C. than the preceding prophecies. Elam was a nation north and east of the Persian Gulf. It fell to Babylon in 596 B.C. It would later ally itself with Persian against Babylon and its capital of Susa became a capital of Persia (and the setting of Esther). This prophecy of doom ends with a promise of restoration that is likely during the Millennial Kingdom.

Chapter 50 Notes

In this chapter the prophecy against Babylon is given.

vs. 1-3 – The defeat of Babylon and her powerless idols is announced. The nation coming from the north is the Medo-Persian alliance.

vs. 4-7 – The exiled kingdoms of Israel and Judah would return home and seek the Lord.

vs. 8-10 – A call to flee before judgment came with the Medo-Persians.

vs. 11-16 – The humiliation of Babylon in their defeat.

vs. 17-20 – Assyria had persecuted Israel and had been judged. Babylon would also be judged. God simply used them to purge Israel of her sins.

vs. 21-32 – The vicious attacks that would defeat Babylon.

vs. 33-34 – The Jews would be preserved through all of this judgment and brought back to their homeland.

vs. 35-38 – The judgments of violence and drought are described.

vs. 39-46 – The utter destruction of Babylon is described. It faded from importance, especially after Alexander the Great took it. It took centuries, but it became a small village where tourists came to see the ruins from the former glory of an empire.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 239

One of the age-old questions that we continually see repeated is why the wicked prosper. In the case of Babylon, it was not that their evil made them to grow into a great power. No, God raised them up. He used them to purge idolatry from the hearts of the Israelites. This was not because God liked Babylon more than Israel. They were simply a tool He used, and when He was finished with them they received His righteous judgment. Sometimes this is why the wicked prosper, because God has a purpose for them. But rest assured that at the end of the day they will receive their just reward.

Hymn for Day 239

Our hymn today is “Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord”, written by Horatius Bonar in 1857. It carries the spirit seen in Jeremiah 50:5 of seeking the Lord.

*Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
however dark it be;
lead me by thine own hand,
choose out the path for me.*

*Smooth let it be or rough,
it will be still the best;
winding or straight, it leads
right onward to thy rest.*

*I dare not choose my lot;
I would not if I might:
choose thou for me, my God,
so shall I walk aright.*

*The Kingdom that I seek
is thine; so let the way
that leads to it be thine,
else I must surely stray.*

*Take thou my cup, and it
with joy or sorrow fill,
as best to thee may seem;
choose thou my good and ill.*

*Choose thou for me my friends,
my sickness or my health;
choose thou my cares for me,
my poverty or wealth.*

*Not mine, not mine, the choice
in things or great or small;
be thou my guide, my strength,
my wisdom, and my all.*

Chapter 51 Notes

In this chapter the destruction of Babylon is described.

vs. 1-5 – The destruction of Babylon is compared to a harvest and the threshing of grain. Babylon is like the chaff that is blown away and forgotten.

vs. 6-8 – Men are warned to flee from the coming judgment against Babylon. There would be no helping her as it came.

vs. 9-14 – The glory of Babylon is nothing compared to the glory of God. It would be humiliated before Him.

vs. 15-19 – The false gods of Babylon are nothing (literally), especially compared to the all-powerful God. God would bless His people, Israel; the false gods could do nothing to stop the judgment against Babylon.

vs. 20-24 – Cyrus and the armies of Persia are addressed here. They will destroy Babylon.

vs. 25-32 – The combined armies of the nations under Cyrus will swiftly defeat and conquer Babylon.

vs. 33-35 – As in the opening verses, the destruction of Babylon is again compared to a harvest. They would reap what they had sowed.

vs. 36-40 – Compare this section to Daniel 5. The inhabitants of Babylon were partying as their city fell. They were too caught up in their revels to notice what had happened or to stop it. Like livestock going to the slaughterhouse, they had no idea what was coming.

vs. 41-48 – The judgment of Babylon is compared to a flood like the oceans. It sweeps through the land and destroys everything in its path. All would see the humiliation of the once proud Babylon and her false gods.

vs. 49-56 – Babylon would reap what it had sowed. They had killed and plundered Judah, so they would be killed and plundered in turn.

vs. 57-58 – Again we see this description fulfilled in Daniel 5 in Belshazzar's feast. The fabled walls of Babylon could not stop the Persians. The city would fall and never return to its greatness.

Chapter 52 Notes

In this chapter is an historical appendix covering events that fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecies. This largely is based on II Kings Chapters 24 and 25 with a few alterations and new information added.

vs. 1-3 – Parallels to II Kings 24:17-20, II Chronicles 36:10-16, and Jeremiah 37:1-2. The year is 597 B.C. as Zedekiah becomes the final king over Judah.

vs. 4-5 – Parallels to II Kings 25:1-2 and Jeremiah 39:1. The year is 588 B.C. and Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian army begins the final siege of Jerusalem.

vs. 6-7 – Parallels to II Kings 25:3-4, Jeremiah 38:28 and 39:4. The year is 586 B.C., and Jerusalem falls as its food stores run out.

vs. 8-11 – Parallels to II Kings 25:5-7 and Jeremiah 39:5-7. The fate of Zedekiah is recorded. He attempted to escape but was captured. His sons were killed in front of him before his eyes were put out.

vs. 12-14 – Parallels to II Kings 25:8-10, II Chronicles 36:19, and Jeremiah 39:8. The systematic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Babylonians.

vs. 15-16 – Parallels to II Kings 25:11-12, II Chronicles 36:20-21, and Jeremiah 39:9-10. More people are carried away captive to Babylon, leaving only a few poor to keep the land.

vs. 17-23 – Parallels to II Kings 25:13-17, II Chronicles 36:18. The record of the treasures from the Temple that were taken as spoils to Babylon. It is interesting that no mention is made of the Ark of the Covenant.

vs. 24 – Parallels to II Kings 25:18. Priests are taken captive to Babylon.

vs. 25-27 – Parallels to II Kings 25:19-21. Officers from the royal court of Judah are captured and executed.

vs. 28 – Parallels to II Chronicles 36:6-7. This is the second deportation of Jewish captives to Babylon. The year is 598 B.C. and 3,023 are taken.

vs. 29 – The year is 587 B.C. as the siege of Jerusalem was still going. 832 Jewish captives are sent to Babylon.

vs. 30 – The year is 582 B.C., and 745 more captives are sent to Babylon.

vs. 31-34 – Parallels to II Kings 25:27-30. The year is 561 B.C. Jehoiachin is released from prison and brought into the royal court of Babylon.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 240

The grandeur of Babylon has entranced men for centuries. The most famous victim of its spell was Alexander the Great. The allure of its wealth and prestige is intoxicating to human pride. Like all sin, it numbs the senses and blinds us to the high cost of our transgressions before God. Without the light of God's Word to guide us, we would be like the proverbial sheep going to slaughter with no idea of the judgment awaiting us. We believers have the task to awaking those around us out of their stupor to flee from the wrath that awaits those do not know Christ.

Hymn for Day 240

Our hymn today is "Awake, My Tongue" by John Needham, a Baptist minister in Bristol, England. It was first published in 1768. It is a song of praise for God and His great wisdom, which Jeremiah 51:15 shows to be displayed in the Creation of this world.

*Awake, my tongue, thy tribute bring
To Him who gave thee power to sing;
Praise Him who is all praise above,
The source of wisdom and of love.*

*How vast His knowledge, how profound!
A deep where all our thoughts are drowned;
The stars He numbers, and their names
He gives to all those heavenly flames.*

*Through each bright world above, behold
Ten thousand thousand charms unfold;
Earth, air, and mighty seas combine
To speak His wisdom all divine.*

*But in redemption, O what grace!
Its wonders, O what thought can trace!
Here, wisdom shines forever bright;
Praise Him, my soul, with sweet delight.*