

by the number of times we note the phrase "the word of the Lord as spoken by _____". The prophecies of these men of God were therefore God's prophecies and not men's. The children of Israel were warned that their sins were the cause of the coming doom and destruction. Isaiah, in chapter 6 of the book, emphasizes the sins of the people in relationship to the holiness of God. Throughout the book the sins of the people are pointed out. More often than not, the sins centered around abuses of God's prescribed system of worship. The book begins by describing Israel as a body full of sores, a body which offered vain oblations to the Lord. Throughout the book, Isaiah again and again points to their vain worship, outward actions without the inward devotion that God required. A fact important in a proper understanding of the prophets is the time of their labors in the land. All of them are described in relation to the exile or captivity. 1) The Pre-exilic prophets (those who prophesied prior to the period of captivity): a) Jonah, Amos and Hosea, prophets of Israel (the northern kingdom) and b) Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, prophets of Judah (the southern kingdom); 2) The Exilic prophets (those who prophesied during the period of captivity): Ezekiel and Daniel; and 3) The Post-exilic prophets (those who prophesied during the period immediately following the time of captivity): Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. From this listing it can be seen that Isaiah was a prophet who worked in Judah, the southern kingdom, prior to the time of the Babylonian captivity. We must remember that Isaiah often projected into the future and spoke of events and individuals that were in captivity, had come out of captivity, and even spoke of events and individuals several hundred years into the future. Some of the topics addressed in Isaiah are: 1) the sinfulness of the children of Israel, 2) the coming captivity, 3) the return from the captivity, 4) the future glory of the Gentiles, 5) the coming kingdom, the church, 6) the Messiah: his life, his death, his burial, his afflictions, his glory, his kingdom, etc., 7) God, the sole hope of Israel, 8) the necessity of repentance, 9) the majesty of God, 10) the preservation of the remnant in Israel, etc. "The contents of the book of Isaiah have been said to include: (1) Warnings and threats against his own people because of their sins. (2) Sketches of the history of his times. (3) Prophecies of the return of Israel from captivity. (4) Prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. (5) Predictions of the judgment of God on other nations. (6) Discourses that urge upon Israel moral and religious reformation. (7) Visions of the future glory and prosperity of the church. (8) Expressions of thanksgiving and praise." [J.B. Tidwell, The Bible Book By Book, p. 114] Because of the nature of the work of the prophets, they were sometimes not too welcome in Israel. Many of the people would rather have heard "smooth things" (Is.30:10ff) than to have heard the accusations that Isaiah and others brought against them. For many, the role of the prophet was not safe. Remember during the time of Elijah that Ahab would persecute the prophets. As a result many of them went into a period of hiding. Jesus spoke of such a persecution in Matthew 23:29-36.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah, like Isaiah, was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah, however, labored in Judah before Jeremiah and would have been dead for quite some time when Jeremiah began his work. It is considered judgment of many scholars that Isaiah was put to death sometime during the reign of the wicked king Manasseh. Jeremiah did not begin his work as a prophet in Judah until the days of King Josiah who reigned several years later than Manasseh. The work of the prophet Jeremiah was in substance the same as that of Isaiah, that is to call the children of Israel back to the right ways of the Lord. Jeremiah was a prophet prior to the exile and may have been in Judah at the time of the beginning of the captivity. He, however, did not go into captivity but went into the land of Egypt where he probably spent the remaining years of his life. [For a listing of the kings of Israel and Judah consult PELOUBET'S BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 770ff]

CHAPTER ONE

1. The opening verses of this chapter set the stage for the work of Jeremiah. He was a prophet in Judah during the reign of Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah and up until the time of the captivity.
2. Verses 4-19 of chapter one depict the calling of Jeremiah. Compare this account to

- that found in Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4.
3. Note that the Lord was aware of the future role of Jeremiah even prior to his birth (vs.5). Jeremiah was a true spokesman for God, "whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." He was not to be afraid of the children of Israel. His work was "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." In this regard, we as Christians were commissioned to work for the Lord. The rooting out, pulling down, destroying and throwing down was to be done to those principles and practices which were not ordained by God (cf. Matthew 15:13). The planting and building was to be done as prescribed by God.
 4. In verse 13ff Jeremiah is told that the judgment which would come upon the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem would come from the north against the children of Israel for all of their wickedness. The Lord told Jeremiah to be prepared for his work and not to be dismayed. He would be as a fenced city and an iron pillar against the kings of Judah, the priests of Judah, and the people of the land. Though they would fight against Jeremiah (vs.19), the Lord promised to deliver him (i.e. Jeremiah).

CHAPTER TWO

1. Beginning with this chapter Jeremiah proclaims the sins of Israel and the sufferings that come upon Israel as a result of those sins.
2. Israel, like Ephesus (Rev.2) left her first love. They forgot that the Lord delivered them out of the land of Egypt and through the desert wilderness. They became vain and walked in vanity. They defiled the land given to them and worshipped Baal. They worshipped other gods as numerous as the amount of cities in Judah (vs.28). They left the fountain of living waters and turned to broken cisterns which could not hold water at all. Their own wickedness and backslidings caused their punishments. They played the harlot under every green tree. Nothing could remove the stains of their iniquities. They were as stubborn as a wild ass which does as it pleases. They are as shameful as the thief. They have forgotten the Lord and sought to depend on Assyria and Egypt (cf. Isaiah). Throughout all of this the Lord pleaded for them to return to the right way. [NOTE: The sheer number of the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi (not counting those who labored but left no written record) is evidence of the fact that the Lord wanted Israel to repent of their sins. The sins of Israel warranted the warning of many prophets and God in his infinite love and wisdom sent them so that his chosen people might be brought back to them.]

CHAPTER THREE

1. The bulk of this chapter emphasizes the sins of Israel and Judah and the concerns of the Lord through the analogy of marriage. Verse 14 quite plainly states that the Lord was married unto the children of Israel. They were his bride. He was, therefore, like a husband to them. He sought to provide for them, but they often turned away.
2. The spiritual whoredom of Israel and Judah is abundantly declared in this chapter, but Judah seems to be receiving the greater criticism. That is because they were able to witness the adultery of their sister kingdom Israel as she plummeted into sin and received punishment. Rather than straightening up and cleansing herself of her own adultery, Judah made pretense of repentance (vs.10). The Lord through the prophet Jeremiah encouraged the nations to acknowledge their wickedness. If they would, then the Lord would restore them to their proper place. While they lingered in sin, the blessings of the Lord were restrained (vs.3).
3. The last section of the chapter (vs.20ff) depicts the house of Israel confessing their sins and acknowledging their iniquities. They realized that their only hope of salvation was in the Lord.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. In verses 1-4 God calls upon Israel to return to him (i.e. the Lord). They are told to circumcise the foreskins of their hearts (vs.4-i.e. to cleanse themselves of worldliness and sin and be wholly devoted unto the Lord).
2. Verses 5-18 declare the judgment which would come upon the Jews if they did not repent

of their sins. The destruction from the "north" (i.e. Assyria & Babylon) would come upon them like a lion. The children of Israel would be astonished when these events come to pass, but unless they change their ways the judgment would most certainly come. [NOTE: Vs. 18 informs us that their wickedness was bitter because it reached into the heart. cf. Gen.6, II Pet.2]

3. In verses 19-31 Jeremiah is seen to be lamenting over Judah. He has been told of the destruction that is to come and can not hold his peace (cf.20:9). He realizes the foolishness and stupidity of the children of Israel. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. As a result the land would become desolate. All of the things that Israel trusted in would flee her.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. The entire fifth chapter is a catalog of the sins of Judah. They were perverse in their lives almost to the extent that none were righteous. They hardened their faces like rocks and were not affected by those things which should have touched them. Even the great men were characterized by this sort of lifestyle.
2. In addition to that Judah was involved in adultery, both physical and spiritual. When God provided for them, they turned and assembled themselves with harlots.
3. Furthermore, they were impious. They dealt treacherously with the Lord and denied him. They refused to acknowledge that they would be punished for their sins.
4. Because of their forsaking the Lord and serving strange gods, the Lord would bring judgment against them. Their blessings would be sifted and restrained. They were full of deceit, rich, fat, and improper in their judgments. Their prophets prophesied falsely and the priests controlled by scheming and the people loved to have it so. As a result, the Lord would visit them with judgment.

CHAPTER SIX

1. This chapter speaks of the destruction of Judah even further. Again, it is emphasized that destruction would come from the north. As a woman was prone to be attacked, so was Israel subject to the wrath of the Lord through the agency of the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
2. The wickedness of the city of Jerusalem flowed forth as the waters of a fountain would. The Lord called for repentance, but the word of the Lord was a reproach unto the people. They had no delight in it. As a result, destruction was to come.
3. In the midst of sin and wickedness the people were promised judgment, but all they saw was peace. Rather than being ashamed when they committed abominations the people were unashamed and could not blush. They refused to walk in the old paths of the Lord. They turned a deaf ear to those who warned of impending doom and destruction.
4. The Lord would bring evil upon them because they did not hearken unto his words or his law, but rejected them both. Their sacrifices were unacceptable. They were labeled as grievous revolters whom the Lord rejected.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Jeremiah continues the call for repentance of the children of Israel. They are told to amend their ways (vs.3ff) and not to trust in lying words. Those lying words involved placing their trust in the temple (vs.4). The Jews developed the idea that the temple would save them. God dwelt in the presence of the holiest of holies and Israel, therefore, would not be destroyed, or so they thought. The Lord assures them that such is not the case. The children of Israel had the same line of thinking in I Samuel 4 when they went up to fight against the Philistines. In order to assure their victory they thought it best to carry the ark with them into the battle, yet God had never commanded such actions. As a result the Philistines were zealous in battle and they captured the ark. The Lord, in referring to the incident at Shiloh, said that the same sort of thing would happen to the present Jews if they sought to trust solely in the temple. In vs. 14ff he promised to do to the temple as he had done to Shiloh-
2. In the latter part of the chapter (vs.21ff) the Lord promises punishment for the rebellion of Judah. Note the passage (vs.21ff) which states that the Lord did not command Israel concerning offerings and sacrifices. This passage must be understood

in the proper setting. Note the following:

"The fundamental ground of agreement between God and Israel was the agreement of Israel to be in submission to the will of God, and God's agreement to bless them and to be their God. Their life was to be a life of obedience. When God revealed the Levitical system of sacrifice to them, and established the temple system, the life of submission would obey God in the sacrifices just as they obeyed him in other things. For their life, being a life of obedience, would manifest itself in obedience in the sacrificial system. God's agreement was not if they would but keep the sacrifices that He would be their God and bless them. If this had been the agreement, all that they would have had to do would have been to keep the sacrifices. But the foundation of the agreement was not would they support a ritualistic system of sacrifices but would they live a life of obedience." [Firm Foundation, J.D.Bales, 7/26/66,p.469]

The command to offer sacrifices came a few months after their departure from Egypt, but their promise to follow the command of God then entailed obedience to the future commands as well. Likewise, when a person becomes a Christian, he must have the attitude in mind that he will obey all of the commands of the Lord in his life, even those which he may not be aware of at the time of becoming a Christian. It is this attitude total obedience to the Lord that represents true conversion to Christ.

3. Because Judah did not hearken unto the word of the Lord, and because they practiced false worship before the Lord (vs.30ff) the Lord would cease to be with them as he had been with them in the past.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. This chapter continues the same theme of previous chapters. Israel is seen to be in the midst of sin and wickedness. They are worshipping all of those things which avail them nothing. They choose a way of death rather than a way of life. They are perpetual backsliders, full of deceit, and unyielding in their ways. The animals which God created are aware of their surroundings, but God's people refused to acknowledge him. They were unashamed of their condition.
2. On the other hand, God through his prophets continuously called the children of Israel to repent of their sins. There was adequate warning of that which was to come, but Israel did not heed the warnings. Jeremiah encouraged them to acknowledge their sins but they would not.

CHAPTER NINE

1. The opening verses of chapter nine point to the sinfulness of Israel. They were involved in lies, deceit, adultery, treachery, etc. They were not valiant for the truth and did not know the Lord as they should. For all of these things, the Lord vowed to judge them. They would be scattered abroad, their cities and their land would become desolate, and they would be consumed.
2. They were admonished to hear the word of the Lord before the judgment came upon them.
3. In the closing verses (vs.23ff) we note that knowledge of God is glory to man, and not might, riches, or the wisdom of man. The chapter closes with a reference to judgment upon other nations. (cf. Isaiah 13-23)

CHAPTER TEN

1. The first 16 verses of chapter ten compare and contrast the one true GOD with the idols made of men. Isaiah pointed out this same point (Is.44:6ff), that it is foolish for men to create and worship an object which cannot hear, see, act, or in anyway do anything to help anyone. Only God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, was in the position to help Judah during the days of their distress. He is the living God, an everlasting king, full of power and wisdom.
2. The last section of the chapter (vs.17-25) is an exhortation for Judah to flee the coming judgment. The cities of Judah would become desolate unless they repented. It is in this context that Jeremiah speaks those famous words "O Lord, I know that they way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The only means of deliverance for Judah was God. Their rejection of him meant their

rejection of hope.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. The Lord reminds the children of Israel of the covenant that he made with their fathers as they came out of the land of Egypt. "Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:..." (vs.4). Since the days of the children of Israel when they left Egypt, God had announced time and again that he sought for obedience (cf. I Sam.15:22), but they had all forsaken his desire. The Jews at the time of Jeremiah were just like their forefathers: "They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers." (vs.10)
2. Due to the sinfulness of Israel and Judah, the Lord would bring evil (judgment) upon them. Note in vs.13 that the number of gods they worshipped is again compared to their number of cities. Again, in vs.15 the children of Israel are likened unto the bride of the Lord, his holy flesh (cf. I Cor.3:16ff, 6:19ff).
3. The last portion of the chapter (vs.18-23) informs us of the plot that the men of Anathoth, the city of Jeremiah, made to rid themselves of Jeremiah (cf. Matthew 23 where Jesus accused the Jews of his day of slaying the prophets as their fathers before them did.). The Lord made this known unto Jeremiah and let him know that these men would receive punishment. The words of Paul apply here: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal.4:16) Rather than submit to the will of the Lord as it was proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah, the people were ready to slay him. Stephen succumbed to such an attitude, Paul was beaten and left for dead by such personalities, and Jesus Christ the very Son of God was crucified because the Jews rejected the truth which he proclaimed and felt threatened by it. Such is often the case when the truth is preached today. Rather than accepting it, far too many people become antagonistic because of it.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. In the opening verses of this chapter Jeremiah questions why the wicked are so prosperous and the righteous not. He wonders such inequities will continue (cf. Job) and when the judgment will come upon the unrighteous.
2. The Lord, in answering Jeremiah, lets him know that more suffering will come (vs.5ff). He likens the present distress unto running with the footmen, but that which will come will be likened unto running with the horses. In other words, times would get harder before they got better.
3. The Lord instructs Jeremiah about why he (i.e. the Lord) was no longer pleased with his children. They (Israel, his children) dealt treacherously with the Lord. For such treatment they would be punished. They would sow wheat and reap thorns. They shall labor in much pain and profit nothing for their efforts. The Lord would one day pluck them as grain would be plucked.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Through the use of the illustration of the loincloth, the Lord teaches the children of Israel through Jeremiah their worth. God instructed Jeremiah to wear a loincloth. He then told him to remove it and bury it in a hole of the rock by Euphrates. After several days he was informed that he should go to retrieve it. When he did, the girdle was ruined. Such showed the condition of Israel. They were as close to God as a girdle (loincloth) could be to a man. But they were not washed (vs.1) and when it was hid in the rock, it became ruined and "good for nothing". Israel became useless and good for nothing just like this ruined girdle, for they would not obey the Lord.
2. In a second illustration the Lord shows how his wrath will come upon Judah. Bottles are set forth which were usually to be filled with the pressed grape juice. The Jews, thinking that they knew what the bottles were thought they they would be filled with a bumper crop of wine. But Jeremiah told them that they were the bottles and that they would receive the bumper crop of the wrath of God. They would become spiritually drunken and would bring upon themselves their ruin.

3. The last part of the chapter shows that the way of the Jews was so deepseated that it would almost be as hard for them to change as it would for the Ethiopian to change his color or for the leopard to change his spots. They needed to rely upon the Lord for strength. If they did not they would be scattered and the Lord would discover their skirts, that is he would expose and punish them for their evil ways.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. This chapter speaks of a famine that is to come upon the land of Judah. The rich and the poor were both affected it. The cattle would calve in the field and leave their young behind for lack of grass. The wild animals had glazed eyes due to lack of water.
2. The children of Israel would then think of the Lord, the hope of Israel and their Saviour, but it would be too late (cf.ch.15). Because the children of Israel loved to wander away from their Lord, God would not accept them. He would remember their sins and punish them.
3. Jeremiah points out the fact that many of the prophets assured Judah of peace (cf. 6:14 & 8:12), but God informs him (i.e. Jeremiah) that such were not true prophets of God. They spoke false visions and by divination (witchcraft, sorcery). The Lord said that those prophets who said that sword and famine would never come would perish by sword and famine and would not be buried because others were afflicted by these same plagues.
4. The last few verses show that Judah would not acknowledge their sins, even though Jeremiah confessed sins and encouraged Judah to do so as well.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. The Lord was going to punish Judah regardless of who sought to intercede in their behalf. Moses pleaded for Israel and Samuel pleaded for Israel, but the pleading of no righteous man would affect the Lord's wrath now; Judah went too far this time. Because of the wickedness of Manasseh (cf. II Kings 21, 24:3-4) the Lord would bring punishment upon them.
2. In verses 10-14 Jeremiah questions why he has the whole world against him. The Lord informs him that he would be entreated well by his enemies when the time for the affliction came. He would be allowed to pass to another land which he knew not.
3. In vs.15ff Jeremiah continues his request of the Lord informing him that he (i.e, Jeremiah) was righteous. He had not bowed down unto the idols of others. He alone stood for the Lord while others mocked. He had consumed the word of the Lord and was willing to teach it to others.
4. For his faithfulness, Jeremiah is informed that he would not be defeated by the people, but rather he would prevail against them (vs.19-21).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. Because of the severity of the punishment which would come upon the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem Jeremiah was forbidden from marrying. (cf. I Cor,7) The destruction which would come would show no partiality to women or children; all would be destroyed.
2. When Jeremiah spoke before the people and accused them of their sins and they would ask why the Lord pronounced all this evil upon us, he was to say: "Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshiped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; and ye have done worse than your fathers; for behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:" (vs, 11-12)
3. Because of their sins they would be cast into a land that neither they nor their fathers knew. But the Lord would not leave them there. Just as he delivered the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, so would he deliver the children of Israel out of the midst of their captivity.
4. The Jews could not hide their sins from the Lord; they were open before him. They would realize that they receive the just recompense of reward.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. The sins of Judah are indelibly marked upon their hearts and upon their altars. For such sins they would be punished. The children of Israel are warned not to lean upon men for their strength. Those who do will be like a shrub in the desert; they shall ~~will~~ not see the good when it comes, but will inhabit the dried places of the wilderness.
2. In the second section of the chapter Jeremiah speaks of the wisdom of trusting in the Lord. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." (vs.7) That person is likened unto a tree which is planted by the waters that flourishes continually. (Compare the first Psalm to this passage.)
3. The wicked are described as being sinful even in their hearts, which man cannot know thoroughly, but which God can always know.
4. God is referred to as the hope of Israel, even in the days of tribulation and persecution. Jeremiah was of this conviction, but, sad to say, the greater part of Israel was not.
5. In the last section of the chapter the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah admonishes the children of Israel to keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath day, a day of solemnity enjoined upon the Israelites in the law (Exodus 20, Deut.5), was a day that was frequently abused. To abuse the day represented and abuse of the Old Testament form of worship. When the Jews forsook the Sabbath day and the commands which pertained to it, they were forsaking worship as God commanded. If the Jews kept the Sabbath day (and all aspect of commanded worship), then God would continue to bless them. Conversely, when the Jews failed to obey the commands of God with respect to the Sabbath, the Lord would refrain from blessing the children of Israel providentially.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. In the opening verses of this chapter Jeremiah is sent to the house of a potter where he watches the man at work. He initially made a vessel which was blemished, but with ease it was remade. Jeremiah was told that just as the potter was able to remake the clay vessel, so could the Lord either rebuild or destroy the nation of Israel. God has the power to make or to break any nation, including the nation of Israel.
2. The Lord instructed Jeremiah to tell the Jews of this power and of the plans which the Lord had to destroy Israel should she not repent. But Israel said: "THERE IS NO HOPE: BUT WE WILL WALK AFTER OUR OWN DEVICES, AND WE WILL EVERY OWN DO THE IMAGINATION OF HIS EVIL HEART." (vs.12) Sad to say, but there are many people who act, if not say, this sort of thing today. When they are informed of the judgment which the Lord will bring upon them should they continue in evil, they turn and say "I'll do what I want to do."
3. As a consequence of this sort of sinfulness the Lord would make the land of Israel desolate, a perpetual hissing. People that passed by would be astonished and shake their heads in disbelief. Israel would be scattered in the face of their enemies. God would no longer deal with them as he had.
4. In the closing verses (vs.18-23) we are again made aware of a plot against the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet prayed that the Lord would defend him, and, as we have elsewhere noted, the Lord promised that Jeremiah would be protected.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. The imagery of the pottery is again brought out in this chapter. Jeremiah is told that the children of Israel would be broken just as the potter's vessel is broken. Furthermore, the vessel will not be made whole again. [Following the period of the captivity many of the Jews did not return to their homeland but rather remained scattered abroad throughout the nations. We have noted many prophecies about this in the book of Isaiah.]
2. The sins of the nation of Israel are abundant: 1) they have forsaken the Lord (a general sin), 2) they have burned incense to other gods, 3) they have built high places of worship to Baal, 4) they have sacrificed their children to Baal. As a result of these sins, Israel would become desolate and a shameful thing to all that know of their sins.

3. Note that Israel is said to have "hardened their necks, that they might not hear" the words of the Lord. Because of this heart condition Israel would become the valley of slaughter. Their homeland would be destroyed and the people of Israel would come under siege, the greatness of which would compel the Israelites to engage in cannibalism.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. Because of his faithfulness to the word of God and because of the prophecies which Jeremiah spoke, he was imprisoned by Pashur the son of Immer the priest. When he was finally released Jeremiah spoke specifically saying that Pashur would witness the atrocities that would happen to his friends and be carried away into the captivity of the Babylonians. In addition to that Pashur is informed that he would die in the time of captivity with his friends, to whom he prophesied lies.
2. In the last portion of the chapter Jeremiah presents a lamentation. He was weary because the word of the Lord had become a reproach unto him. Though he was faithful in the proclamation of the word of God his friends turned against him. We have already noted two plots that were made on his life and one time that he was cast into prison. Because of such persecution, Jeremiah considered to withhold the word of the Lord from the people, but he could not. Note: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. BUT HIS WORD WAS IN MINE HEART AS A BURNING FIRE SHUT UP IN MY BONES, AND I WAS WEARY WITH FORBEARING, AND I COULD NOT STAY." This same sort of attitude ought to characterize Christians today. Even though some might turn against us because of the fact that we are Christians and because we seek to serve the Lord, we ought never to consider changing our lives to suit the world. Instead, we should be that much more bold in our proclamation of the truths of God's word. To Jeremiah the word of the Lord was like a fire that he could not contain, and to try to restrain it made him weary.
3. In addition to this Jeremiah mourns the day of his birth. In this instance his complaints are similar to those of Job. He is surrounded by wickedness. Everybody seems to be against him. If he would have died at birth or before he never would have encounter all of life's troubles. But it is too late to worry about that now. Worry cannot change the past, help the present, or aid the future.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. King Zedekiah sent to inquire of Jeremiah about Nebuchadrezzar and the advance which he was about to make. Jeremiah, speaking the word of the Lord, informed the king that Nebuchadrezzar (same as Nebuchadnezzar) would come against the city of Jerusalem and that he would conquer it. In addition to that the king is told that the Lord would also be with the king of Babylon as he comes against Jerusalem. This was, of course, due to the iniquities of the children of Israel.
2. Verse 8 tells us that the Lord set before the Jews a way of life and a way of death. Those who remained in the city were prone to be killed, but those who left and went into the land of the Chaldeans would be subservient to them.
3. In the concluding verses we note that the Lord told Israel that she would be punished according to the fruit of her doings (vs.14). Israel, who formerly was depicted as leaning upon the temple for security (cf. 7:4), is seen here saying "Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?" (vs.13). The Israelites were under the impression that God would never do anything to punish them as severely as the prophets spoke of. They were soon to be proven wrong.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. The Lord, through the words of the prophet Jeremiah, addresses the future of the kings of Judah. They were admonished to practice justice and righteousness and to take care of the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows. If they were to do these things then the Lord would be with them and bless them. But, if they failed to heed the word of the Lord, then they would lose the blessings which the Lord promised to them conditionally.
2. When they failed to keep the word of the Lord and afterwards fallen into desolation, the nations would pass by and say: "WHEREFORE HATH THE LORD DONE THUS UNTO THIS GREAT CITY? Then shall they answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord

their God and worshiped other gods, and served them." (vs.8-9) The Lord made known his greatness and his divinity and the fact that he was the only one true God to Israel, but he also made these facts known through Israel to the rest of the world. When the nations heard of the great feats which were accomplished by the Lord as the nation of Israel left the land of bondage in Egypt, they were made to marvel and to fear the Lord. Rahab, the woman of Jericho, became a believer because of the reports which she heard about these great manifestations of the power of God. God oftentimes acted not only to teach Israel, but also to teach the rest of the world. The plagues which came upon the Egyptians not only showed to the Jews that God was a great God of power, but it also showed the Egyptians this important tenet. God oftentimes acted for the express purpose of showing the world that he was the one true God. Here, in Jeremiah, when the nations are depicted as asking why these things came upon Israel they are informed that it was because of the unrighteousness of Israel. Though Israel was the chosen people of God, they could come under the wrath of God through their own disobedience. This not only taught Israel, it also taught the other nations of the importance of following the Lord according to his word. In Acts 5 we note the demise of Ananias and Sapphira. One might think that this sort of discipline in the Lord's church, the death of these two individuals, would be a bit too strict and would serve as a strong deterrent to those who may have been interested in the church. But an examination of the passage shows that believers continued to be added to the church.

3. The Lord informs the kings of Judah that they would be taken into captivity. Their palaces and houses of cedar would not prevent the coming destruction. They would perish with the dignity of an ass. (vs.19) The Lord called unto them in the days of their prosperity, but they would not hear. They had been this way since their youth, they would not obey the voice of the Lord. As a result they would be punished.
4. In verse 29 the plea is sent forth for the earth to hear the word of the Lord. But, because of the wickedness of the land, the kings of Judah would no longer reign upon the throne of David. Following the period of captivity the kings of Judah existed in name only. There was no real ruling and reigning king. Such was the result of the wickedness of the kings of Judah and the people of Israel.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1. In the first eight verses of this chapter the Lord address the subject of the remnant. Though the flock (the people) of the Lord were scattered by the perversities of the kings of Judah (and others), they would be restored once again. The Lord would gather the remnant of his flock out of all the countries to which they were scattered and would bring them back once again to the land of promise. There they would be fruitful and increase.
2. Verse 5 is a clear reference to the Christ, the righteous Branch of David. (cf. Rev. 5:1ff and Isaiah). He (i.e. the Christ, the Messiah) would be the shepherd which would not only gather together the faithful Jews (remnant) but would also gather unto himself the Gentiles (cf. John 10:1ff).
3. The last section of the chapter (vs.9-40) is a scathing rebuke of the false prophets which inhabited the land. Several times within the chapter the Lord, through Jeremiah, reproves those prophets who claimed to speak the name of the Lord but who were actually preaching their own dreams and emotions. These prophets said "ye shall have peace" and "no evil shall come upon you." The Lord informed them that he was the God who was near, far off; he was everywhere. He knew what the truth was. These false prophets did not. They prophesied lies and stole the words of the Lord from their neighbors. God's word is identified as fire, a hammer, the truth, and everlasting. Because of the prophet's perversion of the truth, they would be punished.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

In this chapter Jeremiah is shown two baskets of figs. One of the baskets contains ripe figs. The other one contains rotten figs. The Lord informs Jeremiah that just as he is able to distinguish between the good and the rotten figs, so will the Lord distinguish between the just and the unjust in Judah. The just would be returned to the

land of promise, but the unjust would be scattered abroad throughout the nations.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1. Jeremiah had been prophesying unto the city of Jerusalem and the country of Judah for 23 years...yet they did not repent (vs.3). For their failure to hearken unto the word of the Lord as it came by Jeremiah and the other prophets, the children of Israel would be punished. Note that in vs. 9 the Lord refers to Nebuchadrezzar as his servant. This does not indicate that he was a righteous follower of the commands of the Lord, but it does mean that the Lord used him to bring judgment against the children of Israel.
2. Even though the children of Israel would be taken into captivity, and that for a period of 70 years (vs.12), they are told that after that length of time that the Lord would free them and bring judgment upon Babylon.
3. In the concluding section of the chapter we learn that the Lord was going to bring judgment not only upon Israel, Judah, and Babylon, but that he was going to bring judgment upon all of the nations (vs.15-38). The wrath of the Lord is portrayed as an overflowing cup of wine. This imagery is used several times in the Bible (e.g. Revelation) and illustrates how God is a God of long-suffering. In Genesis 15 the Lord said the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, that is they had not gotten to the extreme state of wickedness that would bring about their destruction. When the wickedness built up, so did the wrath of God...but not without limitations. Sooner or later the wickedness and the corresponding wrath of God got to the point that it just overflowed. When that point was attained the Lord poured out the wrath (e.g. bowls of wrath in Revelation) upon the people as their punishment. In verses 19ff we have a listing of those nations that would receive the wrath of God.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1. In the beginning of this chapter we note that Jeremiah was given the commission to go into the court of the Lord's house (i.e. the temple) and speak all of the words which he was commanded. Note also that he was told to "diminish not a word." (vs.2)
2. Jeremiah did as he was told and went to the house of the Lord and began to proclaim his word. He told the children of Israel that if they did not hearken (i.e. obey, not just to hear) unto the word of the Lord, that the city of Jerusalem would become like Shiloh. This was to say that Jerusalem would be destroyed.
3. When Jeremiah finished speaking the priests and the prophets and the people took him, threatening to take his life. They were concerned and upset that Jeremiah had spoken such words of rebuke about their city. Jeremiah was brought before the princes of Judah and the priests, prophets, and the people sought to have him killed. In the midst of this Jeremiah was able to tell them that he spoke only what the Lord commanded him to speak, and nothing more. The princes determined that he was NOT worthy to die, saying that his word was the word of the Lord.
4. At the same time, some of the elders of the land spoke to the assembly of the people and informed them that there was a prophet by the name of Urijah who prophesied during the time of Jehoiakim the same sort of prophecies against Jerusalem. In addition to that they reminded the people of Micah who prophesied the same things during the reign of Hezekiah. Hezekiah, a righteous king, did not put Micah to death. But, sad to say, the prophet Urijah was slain due to the work of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah was able to live due to the hand of Ahikam (cf. II Kings 22:12,14).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1. Jeremiah, through the use of the illustration involving the yokes, teaches that all nations would be subservient to the nation of Babylon (vs.7).
2. Jeremiah urges the messengers to other nations not to listen to the false prophets, the dreamers, the enchanters, and the diviners in their own countries which might say something to the contrary. He assures them that as God is the supreme creator, so will they just as surely be captive to the Babylonians. Those who rebel will be punished through death.
3. Jeremiah also informs the land of Judah of the same message. He tells the people not to listen to all of the false prophets who say that only peace will come. He challenges

the prophets to prove that the Lord is with them, and therefore that they are with the Lord, by calling upon the Lord to keep the articles of the temple at the city of Jerusalem. Jeremiah informed them that such would not occur. God, through the agency of Nebuchadnezzar, would bring these articles to the land of Babylon where they would remain until the Lord did otherwise.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1. During the time of Jeremiah's prophecies a woman by the name of Hananiah, who claimed to be a prophet, stated that the articles of the temple would return to the city of Jerusalem within a period of two years. She stated that within this time period the yoke would be broken from the land of Babylon.
2. Jeremiah informed her that a true prophet of the Lord would be known when their prophecies came to pass. Many came and predicted things which never came. Such are not true prophets.
3. Then, in a brilliant display of craftiness but dull in the truth, Hananiah broke the yoke of Jeremiah claiming that the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar would be just as easily broken within two years. This act may have impressed the people and Hananiah herself, but it was an act without divine backing.
4. Jeremiah later returned unto Hananiah and told her that the yoke were not made of wood; they were made of iron. The words which he spoke were the words of the Lord. Her words were not. He then told her that because of her deceptive prophecies and because of the lies which she committed unto the people, Hananiah would die within the year. The concluding verse shows us that such did come to pass.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

1. This chapter constitutes a letter which was written to some of the exiles already in Babylon. The captivity occurred in three stages. Note the following from E.M.Zerr: [Zerr's Bible Commentary, Vol.4, p.69-70]

"The Babylonian captivity as a whole began in 606 B.C. and ended in 536 B.C., 70 years in all. It began at the end of Jehoiakim's 3rd year and ended at the overthrow of Belshazzar on the night of his noted feast. However, the period had three stages in the beginning which are sometimes referred to as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd captivities for the purpose of fixing certain dates. Another manner of designating them is to do so under the name of the king who was reigning in Judah at the time of the one referred to. The three kings were Jehoiakim, Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) and Zedekiah, who were subdued by Nebuchadnezzar but allowed to sit for a time on the throne of Jerusalem. These facts must be kept in mind or confusion may result from some of the statements regarding the Jews in their relation to the Babylonians."
2. Jeremiah told the captives to prepare for a long stay in the land of Babylon. They were instructed to build houses, to plant gardens, etc. All of this was intended to get them to understand that they would dwell in the land for quite a length of time.
3. As there were false prophets in the land of Judah during this time period, so were there false prophets living in the land of exile. One such prophet is said to have written to the priest instructing him to place Jeremiah in stocks. He allegedly wrote this letter as the Lord instructed him to do so. The priest showed the letter to Jeremiah, who immediately wrote to the exiles and warned them about false prophets in their midst. The specific man who wrote seeking to imprison Jeremiah was told of his future punishment.

CHAPTER THIRTY

1. In verse two of this chapter we note Jeremiah's commission to write the words of the Lord in a book.
2. The bulk of this chapter deals with the promise of the captive's return from the land of Babylon. Several verses emphasize that the Lord would restore Israel, but that the remainder of the nations would not be ^{Restored} destroyed as would Israel (vs.11).
3. Emphasis is given on Israel trusting in the Lord, and only in the Lord. When Israel does this they would return to their homeland and be the people that God wanted them

to be.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

1. This entire chapter speaks of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine. The initial part of the chapter speaks of the return to the promised land, the restoration of the homes of the Jews, and the restoration of the agricultural enterprises. It would be a day of rejoicing for the Jews. As they left the land of Babylon they would not only be rejoicing, but also weeping, weeping for their past transgressions and weeping for the lowly state to which their country and cities had fallen. Jerusalem would need to be rebuilt (cf. Ezra, Nehemiah).
2. The Lord's promise to redeem his sheep, the remnant, out of every land would be fulfilled. They would no longer be in sorrow. They would be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord.
3. In the midst of this section occurs verse 15. "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted for her children, because they were not." This passage was quoted in Matthew 2:13-23 and spoken of as being fulfilled during the time of the early years of the Christ. The ruler of the land, Herod, in an effort to slay this newborn king, who was viewed as a threat to his own (i.e. Herod's) kingdom, commanded that all of the children in the city of Bethlehem two years old and under to be put to death. This attempt was made in order to permanently remove the threat of a new "king". As we are well aware, the attempt, though brutal in scope, failed to accomplish its primary objective. Jesus still lived. In the midst of mourning for the death of the innocent children, the hope of the nation of Israel continued to live. This is paralleled to Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, who died at childbirth. Though she died, and through her death brought mourning to her family, through the child Joseph the hope of Israel continued. He would be the means by which they were delivered from the famine to come. Likewise, the children of Israel returning from captivity were leaving a period which caused them much sorrow, but the Lord saw to it that the sorrow they endured worked an even greater reward when they were returned to their homeland. Christianity is like that. We endure numerous afflictions for the cause of Christ, but the glory of heaven will be worth them all...and then some (II Cor. 4:17).
4. In the next two sections of the chapter (vs.18-22 & 23-30) we note that both the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah would be restored. There is no teaching in the Bible which indicated that 10 of the tribes (the 10 northern tribes) were "lost". Such is a false concept.
5. The last section of the chapter centers around the "new covenant". This passage is quoted in Hebrews 8:6-13 and there ~~re~~ applied to the new covenant which Christ would establish. In the context of Hebrews it is shown to be a covenant superior to the old covenant, for this one (the new one) was dedicated with the blood of Christ, not with the blood of bulls and goats. The people of this covenant, the Israel of God (Gal.6:16), would be a people who were circumcised in heart (Romans 2:20ff). [NOTE: The reference in vs. 34 to "they shall all know me" does not mean that every last person will know the truth of the gospel, but rather it is a reference to the degree to which this covenant shall be known in comparison to the covenant of the Jews in the Old Testament. All nations would be invited into the new covenant (Acts 2:39).

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

1. Jeremiah was imprisoned during the reign of Zedekiah. This came about due to the prophecies which Jeremiah made with reference to the city of Jerusalem being taken by the Babylonians and Zedekiah himself being taken captive by the king of Babylon.
2. During this period of time Jeremiah was told to purchase a field from one of his relatives. This he did. The point being made was, that just as Jeremiah was able to purchase this land, so would the children of Israel be delivered from their captivity and return to obtain what used to belong to them (cf.v.44).
3. Jeremiah then prayed to God. Within the prayer he: 1) praised God for his greatness, 2) praised God for his love, 3) thanked God for the deliverance from Egypt, 4) thanked God for the gift of the land of Canaan, and 5) prayed about the current status

of the Jews.

4. In the last section of chapter 32 (vs.28-44) the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah spoke of the destruction and the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. It would be destroyed because of the disobedience of the Jews. It would be restored because of the love which God had for the Jews. Just as God drove them out, so would he return them (vs.37). Further reference is made to an everlasting covenant (vs. 40; cf. ch.31:31ff).

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

1. While Jeremiah was yet in prison, the word of the Lord came unto him the second time (cf.vs.1ff). He was again told that the Jews would be defeated at the hand of the Chaldeans (i.e. the Babylonians), but that they would eventually be restored.
2. Just as the land was formerly rich and bountiful, but now desolate, so would it become rich and bountiful again (vs.10-13).
3. In the midst of the chapter the Lord again addressed the subject of the Branch of righteousness that would grow out of the house of David (cf. ch.23:5). This is another reference to the Messiah, the Christ. It was during the days of this person that Judah would be saved. That simply means that through the Christ the ultimate revelation (Heb.1:1) and ultimate blessings (Eph.1:3ff) would come.
4. In the remaining portion of the chapter the Lord informs Jeremiah that just as the days and the nights and the seasons continued without failing, so would his promise with reference to the throne of David be fulfilled. (vs.17-26) [Christ, Heb.7-a priest]

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

1. When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came with his armies to fight against Jerusalem, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah telling him to instruct Zedekiah once again about the defeat of Jerusalem. When all of the instructions were received by Jeremiah, he once again went before Zedekiah to relay unto him the word of the Lord. He was told that Jerusalem would indeed be destroyed but that he (i.e. Zedekiah) would be taken captive into the land of Babylon. [NOTE: Many of the prophecies given to the Jews were repeated time and time again. This was not simply to create a lot of pages in our Bibles, but rather to show us that God was persistent in warning his people about their sins and the consequence which would follow. This teaches us: 1) sin is terrible in the sight of the Lord...he will go to great lengths to urge us to avoid it, 2) the consequences of the sin will be great, 3) the Lord loved Israel enough to warn her of her sins and inform her of the punishment to come.]
2. In the remaining part of the chapter we note that the children of Israel were admonished to release their slaves and servants, which they did. But after so doing, they returned back to what they were just commanded to dissolve. Because of this disobedience to the command of the Lord, they were informed of the grievous calamity which would come upon them. They did not grant liberty to their servants as they should, but the Lord would put them at liberty to sword, pestilence, and famine. They would lose their lives during the onslaught on Jerusalem.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

1. In this chapter we learn of the obedience of the Rechabites. They were commanded by their father never to drink wine, and when they were tested by Jeremiah they kept the command of their father. Neither did they build houses, sow seed, or plant vineyards.
2. Jeremiah then compared the obedience of these people to the disobedience of the children of Israel. These families were obedient to the command of Jonadab, but Israel, who received the commands of the Lord over and over again, were not obedient.
3. For the faithfulness of the Rechabites the Lord said that they would be able to continue as a family unit.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

1. During the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was commissioned to record the words of the Lord in a book. All of the words which Jeremiah had spoken concerning Judah and

Jerusalem were to be contained in this scroll/book. Furthermore, when the scroll was completed, Jeremiah told Baruch, the scribe who helped to record the book, to go into the house of the Lord and to read the scroll to the people. This was done in hopes that the reading of the book of the word of the Lord would cause the people to repent of their sins.

2. When Baruch read from the scroll he was heard by Michaiah, the son of Gemariah, who went to the scribes and princes and told them what he heard. After hearing his testimony they sent for Baruch and the scroll. Baruch was asked to read the scroll in their presence, which he did. Following the reading of the scroll, the princes and scribes told Baruch to go with Jeremiah and hide. They then went before the king to describe what they had heard. The king called for the scroll to be brought forth and to be read in his presence, but before the scroll was read in its entirety the king cut the scroll and cast it into the fire.
3. Three of the men made intercession, asking that the king not burn the scroll, but it was burned anyway. Furthermore, he sought to find Baruch and Jeremiah, but they were hid.
4. The Lord then commissioned Jeremiah and Baruch to record another scroll containing the same words of the previous one. Jehoiakim evidently destroyed the first scroll because of the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. vs. 29ff). As a result of his wickedness, judgment was pronounced against him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

1. During the reign of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came against the city of Jerusalem. Zedekiah had yet to be obedient to the Lord. When the siege of the city seemed apparent, Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah to ask him to pray to God for Jerusalem. During this period of time Jeremiah was still free to come and go as he pleased.
2. At the same time that the Babylonians came against the city, they (i.e. the Babylonians) heard that the Egyptians were coming, so they (the Babylonians) left. Jeremiah told the Jews not to be deceived into thinking that they would not return, for he knew that they would. After the Chaldeans (Babylonians) left, Jeremiah was in the land of Benjamin where he was mistakenly taken to be one of the Babylonians who was retreating. Despite his objections to the contrary Jeremiah ended up in prison.
3. Finally king Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah asking "Is there any word from the Lord?". Jeremiah informed him that he would be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. In addition to that Jeremiah asked Zedekiah what he (i.e. Jeremiah) had done to warrant imprisonment. He asked Zedekiah where all the prophets were who had previously spoken saying that Babylon would never come against Jerusalem. He asked that he not be returned to the house of Jonathan (which had been made into a prison). His request was granted and he thereafter remained in the court of the prison.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

1. When others heard of the prophecies of Jeremiah they went to Zedekiah the king and sought permission to slay Jeremiah (vs. 4). Zedekiah delivered the care of Jeremiah into their hands (vs. 5), saying that he could not do anything against them.
2. These men (Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jucal, and Pashur) then cast Jeremiah into a prison beneath the ground. Here Jeremiah remained in the mire with no food nor water.
3. Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian, came and asked the king, Zedekiah, to release Jeremiah from this dungeon lest he die. Zedekiah gave him (Ebedmelech) the permission to remove Jeremiah from the prison.
4. Afterwards, Zedekiah sought information and counsel from Jeremiah concerning what was to happen to his life and the destiny of Jerusalem. Jeremiah informed him that if he (i.e. Zedekiah) were to go into the land of Babylon that the city would not be burned and ravished, but if he refused to submit to the princes of Babylon, then the city would be destroyed. Zedekiah feared that if he went into Babylon the Jews already in captivity would mock him and perhaps do him harm. Jeremiah assured him that the Babylonians would not deliver Zedekiah into the hands of the Jews there. Zedekiah asked Jeremiah not to tell the princes of the court of their conversation, and when they inquired of Jeremiah concerning what was said to Zedekiah, Jeremiah kept his word.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

1. The long awaited and much predicted fall of the city of Jerusalem finally occurs. During the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah the city of Jerusalem was placed under siege. A little more than a year later the city was taken by the Babylonian armies.
2. When the men of the armies of Judah saw this inevitable fate coming they fled the city, but they, and their king, were captured. Verses 5ff inform us that the sons of the king were slain before his eyes and then they (i.e. his eyes) were put out. He was then bound with chains and brought captive to Babylon.
3. Note that the captain of the Babylonians, Nebuzaradan, who was in charge of the siege, only took the wealthy and the workers into captivity. The poor were left behind.
4. Jeremiah was cared for (vs.11ff) and given into the care of Gedaliah.
5. The last few verses inform us that Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian who sought and obtained Jeremiah's release from prison, was told that he too, would be cared for. This was done because of his trust in the Lord (vs.18).

CHAPTER FORTY

1. In the opening section of chapter forty we learn a bit more about the specifics of Jeremiah's freedom. In verse 2ff we note the comments of the captain of the guard who released Jeremiah from his bondage. Note that he stated that all of the woes recently come upon Jerusalem were ~~due~~ to its (i.e. Jerusalem's) sins. He told Jeremiah that he (i.e. Jeremiah) had the freedom to remain in Judah or to go into Babylon. Jeremiah chose to stay in the land of Judah and with Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, who intervened for Jeremiah and prevented others from killing him (ch.26:24).
2. The king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor over all of the cities of Judah. When those who fled from the city learned of this, they began to return to Jerusalem and to Gedaliah. They were then appointed to carry on their labors as before and to serve the Chaldeans (Babylonians) that everything might go well with them.
3. Some of the men that came back informed Gedaliah that Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, intended to slay him. When they asked for the permission to slay Ishmael in order to prevent this, Gedaliah instructed them not to do this thing because they were wrong about Ishmael.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

1. In the opening verses we note that Gedaliah accepted Ishmael and his men in to eat together. It was at this time that Ismael rose up, slew Gedaliah, and slew the Jews and the Chaldeans that were with Gedaliah.
2. After Gedaliah was slain, men came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria to burn incense in the city of Jerusalem. Though the articles of the temple were removed during the time of the fall of the city, it would still be of great importance to worship God in the same place as before. When Ishmael learned of these men he lead them aside, supposedly taking them to Gedaliah, and then he slew them and cast them into a pit. Ten of the men were spared(out of the 80) when they told Ishmael of the wealth which they had.
3. Following this, Ishmael took the remainder of the people captive and began to go toward the land of the Ammonites. When Johanan, the man who tried to warn Gedaliah about Ishmael, learned of these events, he ~~went~~ ^{went} out against Ishmael. When the people who were taken captive by Ishmael saw Johanan and his men coming, they deserted Ishmael and went to Johanan. Ishmael escaped with eight of his men to the Ammonites.
4. For fear of the Babylonians, Johanan prepared to go to the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

1. Johanan and the rest of the Jews approach ^{ed} Jeremiah in order to request that he might pray to the Lord in their behalf. They wanted to know what they should do, and were correct in their desire to know what the will of God was in the matter. When the prophet went to inquire of the Lord they said "Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God." (vs.6) The attitude so exhibited should be the attitude that characterizes every Christian. We should have the mindset that we will be obedient to all of the Lord's commands, even those we may not even know of

immediately, but will learn of during the course of our Christian life. Sometimes the question is asked "how much does one have to know in order to become a Christian". Does one have to know everything there is to know about the church, the Lord's supper, the proper manner of worship, prayer, Christian living, et al.? Of course, if these matters were compulsory prior to becoming a Christian, the number of those who would actually convert to Christianity would be minimal. A person is to learn things prior to becoming a Christian, things which we commonly refer to as 'first principles' (Heb.6:1ff), but a person is to continue to learn after becoming a Christian. (I Pet. 2:2) The attitude previously described will enable a person to learn more and more as they walk the Christian path, and it will cause them to seek to be obedient to all of the Lord's commands.

2. In the last part of the chapter Jeremiah informs the children of Israel of the Lord's will. They are told to remain in Judah and the Lord would continue to be with them at he had been with the Jews in the past. They were assured that the king of Babylon would do nothing to harm them. But, if they went into the land of Egypt in order to escape what they thought would be the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar, they would be sure to receive that which they sought to avoid. Jeremiah repeatedly emphasized the punishment that they would receive should they seek to enter the land of Egypt. In addition to that, the Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, said that the children of Israel were deceitful in their hearts when they came to Jeremiah asking him to inquire of the Lord. "For ye dissembled (i.e. were deceitful) in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it." (vs.20)

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

1. We learn in this chapter that the Jews did not believe the words of Jeremiah to be the words of the Lord. So often we express the willingness to be obedient to the will of the Lord so long as it is the will of the Lord that we can do want we want. Such seemed to be the idea of the Jews under Johanan. They refused to be obedient to God's word and prepared to go into Egypt.
2. In the last part of the chapter (vs.8ff) Jeremiah informs the Jews just how they will be punished in Egypt. Babylon, the same nation that came against the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, would also come against the nation of Egypt and defeat them. The destruction to be wrought upon the land is described in the closing verses of the chapter.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

1. The bulk of this chapter contains the admonitions of the Lord through Jeremiah to the remnant of Judah which went into the land of Egypt. They were asked to remember the wickedness and disobedience of Judah before the fall. Just as surely as they were to fall into the hands of Babylon, the Lord told these renegade Jews that they would be punished for going into the land of Egypt. Numerous times in this chapter it is pointed out that the Jews lost the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem through their disobedience to the word of God. The present Jews were doing the same thing; they were exercising their freedom of choice and going against the will of God. They would, therefore, received punishment just as the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem did.
2. The Jews responded to these things by saying that they were doing alright in Jerusalem when they were offering sacrifices unto strange gods, that is until the destruction came. They said that they saw no evil and had plenty of food then. Such is a sad condition. As long as they were satisfied everything was alright. They were told that the very reason the destruction came to Judah and Jerusalem was because of the sins of Israel, sins which even they were guilty of.
3. The chapter closes by warning the Jews in Egypt that God would punish them. Just as ~~Nebuchadnezzar~~ the king of Babylon took Judah, so would he defeat Pharaohhophra and take Egypt. They were told that only a very few of them would escape the coming punishment in Egypt. Then they would know that the Lord was right, but then it would be too late.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

In this brief chapter we note that Jeremiah encourages Baruch, the man who served as his scribe. It seems that Baruch had become quite discouraged as a result of all of the prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem to the extent that he worried about his own life. This chapter assures him that he would not be lost, but would be protected. [It is the opinion of Zerr that this chapter should be placed after ch.36. The book of Jeremiah was not written in chronological order, a trait common to many of the books of prophecy.]

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

1. In the book of Isaiah we noted a long series of woes pronounced upon the nations of the world (cf. Isaiah 13-23). Here in the book of Jeremiah we are about to begin a similar series of judgments pronounced against the nations. The first of these is made against the nation of Egypt.
2. The first 26 verses of this chapter refer to the coming judgment that will be Egypt's. Note that this judgment is referred to as "the day of the Lord God of hosts". The phrase has reference to the Lord's coming in judgment against the nation of Egypt. The passage specifically refers to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar (vs.26) as the enemy which would defeat Egypt. The destruction is mentioned numerous times through means of allegory within the chapter.
3. The closing verses of the chapter (vs.27-28) assure Jacob (the remnant of Israel in Egypt) that they would not be destroyed as would the Egyptians, but that did not mean that they would be completely without punishment of any sort. They would receive their just reward.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

In this chapter we learn of the judgment to be brought upon the nation of the Philistines. Their destruction is also described as coming "out of the north", an obvious reference to the nation of Babylon. It would be well to remember that the judgment being pronounced upon these nations was due to their own wickedness and unrighteousness.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

This chapter is devoted in an explanation of the destruction of the Moabites, the descendants of Lot. The unrighteousness of the Moabites is well depicted in this chapter. They were described as : 1) madmen, 2) trusting in their own works and treasures, 3) drunken, 4) being magnified against the Lord, 5) deriding Israel, 6) proud, 7) lofty, 8) arrogant, 9) haughty, 10) lying, 11) idolatrous, et al. For their sins, they would be punished.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

1. Continuing in the prophecies of destruction toward other nations, Jeremiah, the prophet of God speaks concerning the Ammonites. They would be punished due to their self-glory, their trusting in treasures, and their pride.
2. The second section of the chapter (vs.7-22) addresses the punishment which would come upon the nation of Edom.
3. The third section of the chapter (vs.23-27) speaks of the destruction to come upon Damascus (Syria).
4. The fourth portion alludes to the punishment upon Kedar and Hazor (vs.28-33).
5. The final prophecy (vs.34-39) deals with the judgment to be brought against the nation of Elam.

CHAPTER FIFTY

This chapter (and the next) deals with the judgment to be brought against the nation of Babylon. Though the Lord used them to bring judgment and justice against the land of Jerusalem and the city of Jerusalem, they too, would be likewise judged for their own sins. In this chapter we note that Babylon was: 1) proud, 2) the destroyer of the heritage of God (i.e. Israel), 3) guilty of sinning against the Lord, 4) a nation of liars, et al. Notice that several times within the chapter the prophet makes reference to Israel and Judah as lost sheep which had gone astray, but which would now be restored to their rightful place. The chapter is full of rich illustrations which exemplify the wickedness of Babylon and the judgment which was to come against them.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

This lengthy chapter is a continuation of the judgments which began to be announced against Babylon in the previous one. In this chapter the Medes are specifically singled out as those who would be the future oppressors of the land of Babylon. Note that in this chapter (as well as the last, cf. 50:28) that the Lord said that he would avenge his temple (vs.11). The temple, of course, was the primary object in the system of worship to the Jews of the Old Testament. For God to avenge the temple meant that Babylon would be punished and Israel would be restored to her former place. The chapter is replete with references to the raucous and sinful behavior of the Babylonians and their wicked empire. But, as the Lord so states, their wall was about to fall. The close of the chapter depicts Babylon as a sinking stone in the river Euphrates. Her prophecy is sure to be fulfilled.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

1. The first part of this chapter repeats the events described in chapter 39 of Jeremiah. Nebuchadnezzar came against the city of Jerusalem and laid siege to it. In a little more than one year the people and the city were captured and the work of the destruction was about to begin and end.
2. Zedekiah went into Babylon and witnessed the death of his own sons after which his own eyes were put out. Following these events the process of captivity began. The captain of the guard of the Babylonian slew many people and brought others into captivity. The numbers are given in the concluding verses of the chapter. Though they are not large numbers, we must remember that many more people were slain and that even other fled the city and country and went to lodge in other areas until the threat was over.
3. After having taken the city, the Babylonians burned and destroyed the temple and the houses of great stature in Jerusalem. Many of the articles of the temple were taken away into Babylon and even the wall of the city was torn down. (It was later rebuilt during the times of Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, et al.)
4. The last few verses depict the release of Jehoiachin in the land of Babylon. This was previously noted in II Kings 25.

JEREMIAH: A REVIEW

Jeremiah was a prophet to the southern (and at that time the only) kingdom of Judah. His position in history was greatly different than that of Isaiah, the prophet just studied before him. Whereas Isaiah was slightly removed from the captivity which was to come and where he was predominantly more of a Messianic prophet, Jeremiah was right in the midst of things. He was not predicting the fall of Judah into the hands of some distant unknown country 100 years from then. He was telling of the imminent fall of Judah into the hands of Babylon. Because of this proximity to the captivity, Jeremiah fell under severe persecution at the hand of different monarchs, priests, nobles, and yes, even other so-called prophets. His life was threatened numerous times and he was also imprisoned more than once. We have often remarked that Jeremiah was the "weeping prophet" but G. Campbell Morgan has well said "We wrong Jeremiah when we speak of him merely as a prophet of tears, or think of him only as a man haunted by fears. His tears were evidences of his compassion, but his compassion never made him unfaithful to the Divine message. All evidences of weakness were manifested in the presence of God, and never when he stood as God's messenger."

[THE ANALYZED BIBLE, p. 219] Jeremiah worked during a time when Judah was wholly given to their own wickedness. The number of times that the prophets addressed the Jews with regard to their sins shows God's concern for their souls. The prophet was in the unenviable position of having the commission to convict the people of their sins. Like Stephen in Acts 7, Jeremiah was often rebuked and chastised for his messages. The people were over confident. They were under the false impression that because the temple was in the midst of the city of Jerusalem, that nothing could ever happen to them. Hence their cries of "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord..." God sent his prophets, including Jeremiah, rising early in the morning. It was not that Judah and Israel were never warned, or that they were warned insufficiently, but rather that they were warned so many times that they were without reason or excuse for their behaviour. Several times in the book we noticed that they blatantly told the Lord "We will not obey you". When such an attitude

prevails it can be well said that the judgment of the Lord is not far off. Such was true in this situation. Jeremiah quite frequently had to deal with false prophets, and usually with them outnumbering Jeremiah. Imagine that you were Jeremiah speaking the truth to the Jews in Judah, but every other prophet around (NOTE: Zephaniah may have been contemporary with Jeremiah at the early part of his work.) was saying something else. It is sad to say that people when given the choice between one man saying something and a whole host saying the exact opposite, their decision to follow one usually goes in accord with the many and not the one. Jeremiah, therefore, understandably felt rejected and reproached for the word of God, that is because of the word of God (cf. Revelation 1:9). Yet, in the midst of such persecution, Jeremiah did not faint from his task (Jer.20:9). Jeremiah was not only a prophet who addressed the gloom and despair, he was also a prophet of the future glory which would be Judah and Israel's.

"But he saw far beyond the judgments of the near future to a brighter day when the eternal purpose of divine grace would be realized. The book, therefore, emphasizes the future glory of the kingdom of God, which must endure though Israel does perish. He saw this future glory: (1) As the salvation of a righteous remnant, 4:27; 5:10,18; 30:11. (2) As the restoration of this remnant, 3:12, 21, 22; 16:14-15. (3) The rise of a new Jerusalem where God would dwell, 33:16. (4) As the coming of the Messianic king, 23:4-6, 30:9,31. (5) As the new covenant of pardon and grace, 31:33,34,; 32:40; 33:8. (6) The presence of Jehovah among His people, 3:16. (7) As the turning of the nations to Jehovah, 3:17; 4:2; 16:19; 33:9. He made two special contributions to the truth as understood in his time. (1) The spirituality of religion. He saw the coming overthrow of their national and formal religion and realized that, to survive that crisis, religion must not be national, but individual and spiritual. (2) Personal responsibility (31:29-30). If religion was to be a spiritual condition of the individual, the doctrine of personal responsibility was a logical necessity. These two teachings constitute a great step forward." [J.B.Tidwell, THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK, p.119-120]

LAMENTATIONS

Though the author of the book of Lamentations is not specifically stated, it is generally attributed by Bible scholars to Jeremiah. This is due to the fact that the book contains a thorough discussion of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem by someone who witnessed these tragic scenes. Jeremiah happens to fill the bill. As a matter of fact, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T. scriptures) prefaced the book with these words: "And it came to pass, that after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented this lament over Jerusalem, and said...". [Morgan, p.239]

CHAPTER ONE

1. The first chapter plainly depicts the sorrows for the city now desolate, fallen Jerusalem. The writer speaks representatively of the city and all of the captives now apart from the city.
2. Jerusalem was no longer the flourishing and prestigious city she once was. She is referred to now as a widow whose entire family has died or fled from her. All of this resulted from her sins (i.e. the sins of the people of the city).
3. The writer laments (mourns) for the city, wishing that she was once again what she had been in the past. He, too, recognizes that the sins of the people brought the downfall.
4. Now the inhabitants of the formerly rich city were begging bread and living in captivity. She no longer had princes, kings, priests, elders, and nobles dwelling in her midst. She had become desolate.
5. The emphasis that Jeremiah places upon this scene is grand indeed. He had been the prophet that spoke to the children of Judah, telling them that one day they would be judged. No longer does he look to the future for judgment, for it has already passed and he is walking in the heaps and the rubble of the great city that once was. He did not think to himself "I told you so", but rather he mourned for the people who refused to repent. It is sad to say that one day a scene like this will again transpire. Only it will not be the destruction of one city and one nation, but rather the destruction of the entire world.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The initial chapter of the book presented the condition of Jerusalem past and present. She was formerly great, now she was full of shame. Between the two conditions came the judgment of the Lord which is so aptly described in the greater portion of this chapter. No longer was Israel and Judah the apple of Jehovah's eye. No longer were they remembered as before. Now they were cast down. The anger of the Lord came against them and devoured them. Their tabernacle was taken away as a garden. Their places of assembly were destroyed. Their walls were torn down. Her gates sunk into the ground. No more prophets speaking of destruction, for it had already come. The people remembered what it used to be like, but now the situation had changed.
2. The closing part of the chapter shows the people of Judah in more of a penitent spirit. They cried to the Lord and asked him to consider his people once again, but though the Lord planned to restore them, they would still have to endure punishment for their previous wickedness.

CHAPTER THREE

1. The first portion of the chapter shows the suffering which was endured by the prophet Jeremiah. The passage probably not only refers to Jeremiah, but also to the people of Judah as they are representatively portrayed by the prophet.
2. In the middle, and then again at the end of the chapter, the prophet expresses hope and confidence for the future. He is assured that even though the Lord has punished the people for their sins, that he (i.e. the Lord) will not persecute them endlessly.
3. As before the prophet acknowledges the fact that the suffering and punishment which Judah and Israel endured came about as a consequence of their own failures and shortcomings. When they repented of their sins, and when their punishment was over, they would be returned to their homeland.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. In this chapter the prophet once again centers upon the devastation which had taken place. The temple was strewn about the streets of Jerusalem. The children of Judah went hungry. The mothers of some of those children even slew their own sons and daughters and boiled them for food. Those who were used to the "scarlet" riches now went among the dunghills. The prophet depicts a gruesome picture of the plight of the Jews, but he emphasizes that the judgment of God has been accomplished (vs.11,22). They could get no worse than they were. They could not be taken again into captivity. Their judgment was completed.
2. Toward the close of the chapter Jeremiah emphasizes that judgment and justice would come upon other nations as well (e.g. Edom). The chapter closes with more of an attitude of hope than previously expressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. The last chapter of the book of Lamentations speaks further of the suffering which the Jews were enduring. They acknowledged their sins (vs.16) and realized that they suffered as a consequence of them.
2. The sadness of their situation is again grimly portrayed, but they realize that through the Lord they had hope. Though it seemed as if God had punished them forever, they turned to him for hope of restoration. They fervently asked that the Lord might consider their quandary and behold their reproach.

LAMENTATIONS: A REVIEW

Lamentations presents in a nutshell all of the sorrows and woes which came upon Judah and Jerusalem as a result of their sins. The form of Lamentations in the Hebrew language is a bit unusual as you will note:

"There are five independent poems in as many chapters. Chapters 1,2,4, and 5 have each 22 verses or just the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter 3 has 66 verses, or just three times the number of letters of the alphabet. The first four chapters mentioned (1,2,4,5) are acrostic, that is, each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet following the order of the alphabet. In chapter three each

letter is used in order and is three times repeated as the initial letter of three successive lines. It is also of interest that in the chapters that have 66 verses each verse has only one third as many poetic measures as are found in the verses of the chapters that have only 22 verses, thus making the same number of measures, whether there are 22 or 66 verses. All of this shows how the poems were wrought with great care and diligence." [J.B. Tidwell, THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK, p. 120-121]

With reference to sin the book teaches that 1) sin will certainly be punished, 2) that sin grieves the heart of God, 3) that sin will be triumphed over by God, 4) that sin blinds men to their best interests (cf. II Cor.4:4), 5) that sin turns men against their best friends, and 6) that sin destroys nations as well as individuals. With reference to love the book of Lamentations teaches us that 1) love does not blind us to the faults of those we love, 2) it does not cover up faults, but tries to win us from them, and 3) it does not desert one who, heedless of warning, persists in sin and meets calamity. Throughout the sins and the warnings the Lord still loved Judah. Lamentations also speaks of the sorrows that can weary the righteous. Jeremiah was truly sorry that Judah did not repent, but rather chose to be punished for her sins. Jeremiah sorrowed for those people whom he had tried to warn from judgment to come. It is sad to say that many people today will just as blatantly continue in sin despite the warning of concerned friends, neighbors, and relatives. After they have died in their sin, we may sorrow, but all of the sorrow one can have will not bring them back. With this in mind, we should try ever so hard to do our best each and every day to teach the lost and to restore the erring. The scene at the end of time will not be quite the same as Jeremiah's view in Lamentations. Then, those who are righteous will have no more sorrow or grief (Rev.21:1ff), but those who perish will have the same throughout eternity.

EZEKIEL

You will remember from our previous study that the prophets are divided into three distinct periods of time: 1) pre-exilic, 2) exilic, and 3) post-exilic. Ezekiel is one of the two prophets who served during the exilic period (the period of captivity). For this reason the book of Ezekiel (and Daniel) are quite different in their characteristics when compared to the other books of prophecy. In addition to that, the book of Ezekiel contains a completely different style of writing called apocalyptic writing. This style, similar to the style of the book of Revelation, was a common form of writing that developed during the period of exile. Daniel is another book written in the same manner. Some of the symbols and methods of writing are necessary to learn in order to fully understand much of the material of the book. The following are characteristics of apocalyptic writings: 1) cosmic dualism [The presentation of 2 opposing forces usually personified are locked in combat.]; 2) reflection of a crisis situation in history [e.g. the time of captivity, persecution at the hand of the Romans, et al.]; 3) generally pseudonymous [This trait was common for many of the non-canonical writings, but all of this genre incorporated in the canon bare the author's names.]; 4) they usually claimed to be revelations through visions [Visions are to be noted as separate and distinct from dreams.]; 5) the books are "sealed" [This trait is typical of non-canonical literature, but not of canonical. NOTE: The term canon simply refers to those books which are part of the Bible.]; 6) they are predictive [All of the books of this genre tell of the future outcome of history. Of course, only those that are inspired of God can be depended upon. The rest are only guesses.]; 7) they use a common symbolism [The symbols used incorporate numbers, animals, etc. in order to convey the intended message of the book. The purpose of this sort of writing is highly specialized. Such books, written during a period of crisis, contained a hidden meaning. The meaning, however, was not hidden to the intended readers and recipients of the book, but it was hidden from those who were not supposed to know of the contents of the book. In this way, the truth could be spoken to a specific group of people without the "enemy" finding out. It served, therefore, as an extended "code" by which God's messages were distributed to the people. The key to understanding such writing is the knowledge of the general message, as opposed to an understanding of all of the symbolical details. Each symbolic message conveyed a general thought and was never intended to be scrutinized excessively in order to determine some sort of "secret" code. The intended message is always clear. [cf. TRS classnotes on REVELATION]