

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

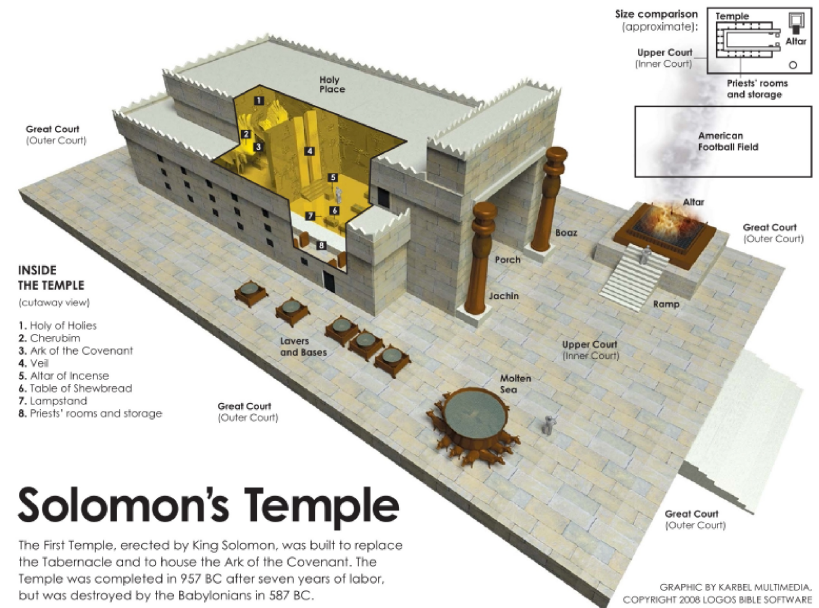
Week 57

“Don’t Rebel But Submit”

Study: Jeremiah 27:12-22

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20, James 4:1-10

Memory: Isaiah 40:27



What Does the Bible Say?

A few years into his rule, Zedekiah had decided that he did not want to be under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar and was planning to rebel against Babylon. Jeremiah sent a message to him telling him that it would not be in his favor to cast off the yoke of bondage which Nebuchadnezzar had placed on him. His rebellion would certainly lead to his death and would bring great war, famine and disease on the people of Judah. They had already experienced great heartache over the last several years and Zedekiah's poor decision would lead to more. Even if he united together with the other nations around him, Nebuchadnezzar would not be stopped and the other nations would be destroyed as well. The false prophets were telling Zedekiah that it would be okay and that Babylon would leave them alone, but they were wrong. God had not sent these prophets and if he

chose to listen to these false prophets then Zedekiah and Judah were headed towards great destruction (vs 13-15).

Jeremiah also appealed to the priest and the people encouraging them not to listen to these false prophets. These men claimed that the things taken from the temple would soon be returned and that all would be well. Jeremiah wanted the people to surrender to Babylon's wishes and avoid any further destruction in the land. Their choice to submit to Nebuchadnezzar would spare their lives. Jeremiah challenged the false prophets to pray to the Lord for help and ask God to intercede for them. They were to ask God to spare what was left in the temple, rather than predicting that the items taken would be returned. This is the opposite of what they were doing because they were declaring that they did not need God's help (vs 16-18).

Nebuchadnezzar had not taken many of the larger items from the temple area and there were most likely other vessels that had been hidden in the city. Though many of the valuables were taken in the first two invasions, there were some things that had been left. Yet, if the people continued in their rebellion towards Nebuchadnezzar, one more invasion would happen and this invasion would be severe and complete. Almost everything from the temple would be carried away and be left in Babylon until God saw fit to bring them back and restore Jerusalem (vs 19-22).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It is interesting to note that the Israelites viewed their problems as a result of the Babylonians, not realizing that they were the ones who brought this upon themselves by refusing to return to God. It is easy for all humans to become focused on the things of this world, not realizing that the supernatural war that is going on is far greater. Ephesians 6:12 say, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." The war the Israelites were in was not with Nebuchadnezzar, but with God. Instead of physically rebelling and trying to fight, they were called on to seek God and ask Him to fight for them. This meant that they would also have to submit to God and His desires for them. It would be a humbling experience for them to say they couldn't do it, but they desperately needed God. This is the same battle that you and I will face each day. It is easy to want to do things in your flesh and your earthly power rather than to humble yourself and submit to the power of God.

What had Zedekiah planned to do (vs 1-12)?

What did Jeremiah tell Zedekiah to do (vs 13)?

What would be the result if they listened to Jeremiah (vs 13)?

What three things would lead to the death of the people if they continued in their rebellion (vs 13)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why were they told not to listen to the thoughts of the false prophets (vs 14)?

What did God not do (vs 15)?

How can you know if someone was sent by God or if someone is a false prophet?

What would be the result of listening to the false prophets (vs 15)?

Who did Jeremiah speak to next (vs 16)?

Why do you think he chose to speak to more than the king?

What did he tell the people not to do (vs 17)?

What would be one of the signs that would help them determine false prophets from true prophets (vs 18)?

What items were left in the temple (vs 19)? (See image above)

What does verse 20 describe?

What was going to happen to these items (vs 21-22)?

When would these items be returned?

“*Learning From The Past*”

Study: Jeremiah 28:1-17

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-40

Memory: Isaiah 40:27

What Does the Bible Say?

This passage makes it easy to place in chronological order since we are told when the event happened. It happened in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah which would have been around 593 B.C. There was a prophet named Hananiah who talked to Jeremiah in the temple. This was not a private conversation, but was declared in front of the priests and the people who were there. Hananiah declared that God had spoken to him telling him, that God had broken the power of the king of Babylon and within two years all the vessels that had been taken from the temple would be returned. In addition to this, Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) would be returned to Jerusalem and would become the king of the land once again. He emphasized that the yoke of bondage, which the people of Judah were experiencing, would be broken (vs 1-4).

Jeremiah didn't like what he was hearing since he knew that God had told him something completely different. He spoke directly to Hananiah but in a way that everyone could hear. He started his speech with the word “Amen” which meant “so be it.” Basically, Jeremiah wanted what Hananiah said to be true. He wanted Jerusalem to be restored, but he knew that was not what God declared. Jeremiah reminded the people of the many prophets that had gone before them, some were true and some were false. The one clear way to know the difference between the two was the evidence found in the prophecies that were fulfilled. Jeremiah and Hananiah were declaring opposite things, yet only one could be true. Many of the things that Jeremiah had declared up to this point had already come true, yet the people tended to believe this false prophet simply because what he said was easier for them to hear (vs 5-9).

In the beginning of chapter 27 we read that Jeremiah was commanded to make a yoke and place it around his neck. We are not sure if he continually wore this yoke out in public or put it on again when he went into the temple, but we know he had it on because Hananiah took it from him and broke the yoke, symbolizing how God would break the yoke of bondage that the Babylonians had placed upon the people. After this,

Jeremiah walked away, leaving the people with a choice of who they were going to believe (vs 10-11).

A short time after this event occurred, God instructed Jeremiah to go to Hananiah and to tell him that though he broke the yoke of wood, it would be replaced with a yoke of iron. God was going to cause all the nations who would choose to rebel against Babylon to face a much more difficult road. A yoke of iron could not be broken and the weight of it would be much greater. The people were going to be forced to serve Babylon for many years and even their animals would be under the control of Babylon (vs 12-14).

Jeremiah turned his attention directly to Hananiah and told him that the Lord did not send him. He declared that Hananiah was a liar and that God was going to remove him from the face of the earth and that he was going to die in that year. This was a result of the direct rebellion against God. The words of Jeremiah came true in just a couple of months (vs 15-17).

How Does this Apply to Me?

You probably have heard the phrase, “Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it.” This has always been a problem for men, but I believe that in our day and age the problem is becoming more and more evident. With the advancement in technology and access to knowledge it is easy for the current generation to view themselves as wiser than the generations that have gone before. Though culture does change in the world with the advancement of technology, there are many things that don't change. God does not change. His Word does not change. His Word is just as relevant today as it has always been. It is easy to want to cling to new ideas, but we need to make sure we don't forget the past. Jeremiah challenged the people to recall the prophets of the past. The ones who were true prophets had their prophecies fulfilled. The point that he was making was that their fruit gave evidence to what kind of tree they were. All types of movements have come and gone in Christianity, but you would be wise to look at and study the movements and individuals who made a lasting impact on the world for Christ.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the faithful believers who have gone before you.*
- * *Ask God to help you learn from the past.*
- * *Praise God because He is the only source of truth.*

When did this event take place (vs 1)?

What did Hananiah say God had told him (vs 2)?

Why would the people have loved this news?

What did Hananiah say would happen (vs 3)?

Who would also return (vs 4)?

Why did Jeremiah like what Hananiah had said (vs 5-6)?

Was it truth just because it sounded better? Explain.

Who did Jeremiah make reference to (vs 8)?

How did the people know the difference between false and true prophets (vs 9)?

How can you know the difference today?

What did Hananiah do with the yoke (vs 10)?

Why did he do this (vs 11)?

What did God tell Jeremiah to tell Hananiah (vs 13)?

What was the difference between a yoke of wood and a yoke of iron (vs 14)?

How severe was their yoke going to be (vs 15)?

How was this completely opposite to Hananiah's prophecy?

What was going to happen to Hananiah (vs 16)?

How did God fulfill this prophecy (vs 17)?

Why is important to listen to the right people?

“God Knows His Plan For You”

Study: Jeremiah 29:1-14

Reading: 2 Kings 24:10-17, Romans 8:26-39

Memory: Isaiah 40:27

When God led our family to move to Michigan, I was planning to continue my business of buying and selling used ipads as a way to provide income for our family. I had just purchased over \$10,000 of 3rd generation ipads a week before we moved, but the day we left Michigan, Apple came out with the 4th generation ipad which sent prices of the ipad 3 tumbling down. I was stuck with a load of ipads that I had to sell for less than what I paid and I had no job and no income. This was not my plan when we submitted to God's call for us to move and I struggled for several months with what God was doing. Yet, through the whole process God was teaching me to trust in Him and realize that His plan for me was far better than I could ever imagine.

Today we will read how the situation the Israelites were in was less than ideal, but God reminded them that His plan was for their good.

What Does the Bible Say?

Chapter 29 includes a letter written by Jeremiah to those who had been taken to Babylon as captives. Though some captives were taken in the first invasion of 605 B.C., many more were taken the second time as recorded in 2 Kings 24:14-16. These captives included Jehoiachin and his mother, along with many craftsman of the land. Jeremiah used the envoy sent to Nebuchadnezzar by Zedekiah to deliver this letter to those who had been taken captive (vs 1-3).

The letter stated that it was written to all the exiles who had been taken to Babylon as captives. They were told to build houses and plant gardens in Babylon. They were to start a new life in the land because they would be there for a while. They were to start normal lives there by marrying and having children. Instead of living in stubbornness and being defiant to the Babylonian kingdom, or pining to go home, they were to become established, profitable residents of the cities they lived in. They were to pray for the cities they dwelt in, asking God to bless these cities and cause the people of Babylon to prosper. When the cities would prosper, so also

would the Israelites who dwelt in them (vs 4-7).

Jeremiah warned them not to let any of the false prophets who were taken into captivity to convince them of anything different. Even if these men claimed to have dreams from God, the people were not to listen. Listening to these men had gotten them in trouble in the first place and they were not to make the same mistake again. Jeremiah had proved that he was a prophet of God because His words were coming true (vs 8-9).

Most of the Israelites would have been longing for a quick return to their home, but Jeremiah made it clear that they would be in the land for seventy years. God was not going to forget about them during this time, but would bless and prosper them in Babylon until He was ready to return them home. God had great plans for the people of Israel and these plans were to prosper them and do good for the nation. Though they had to suffer and those living back in Israel would continue to suffer, God had future plans for them as a nation that were full of hope. God had not abandoned them even though He had caused their exile, but instead, God was using this hardship to prepare them for His restoration of Israel. God wanted them to learn from their punishment and wanted them to choose to call on Him and let Him be their God. If they would choose to do that, at the end of seventy years He would bring them back to Israel and restore their fortunes in the land. God was not done with the Israelites nor with the land of Israel. He had every intention to restore them back to their land (vs 10-14).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize what God's plans are for you? When you go through difficult times in your life it is easy to think that God does not care about you and that He has forgotten you. It is easy to think that God's plans aren't near as good as your plans, but you must remember who God is and how much He loves you. God's plans for you are not to harm you or to hurt you, but they are for your good. God's way of doing things is always best. The Israelites were told to accept this plan and not to fight it. Instead, they were to embrace the less than ideal situation they were in and make the most of it. This is the same approach you should take as well when things don't work the way you want. It is easy to become frustrated and discontent with your situation when it is not your choice, but when you choose to submit to God, you can find great peace and joy in the midst of whatever happens in your life.

Who was this letter directed towards (vs 1)?

How do you think many of these people would have been feeling (vs 2)?

Who had Nebuchadnezzar taken away from Israel (vs 2)?

Why do you think the king of Babylon did this?

Who was sent to deliver this letter (vs 3)?

Why did Jeremiah refer to them as "exiles" (vs 4)?

What were they told to do in verse 5?

What were they told to do in verse 6?

Why were they told to do these things?

What were they supposed to do for the cities they were in (vs 7)?

Why do you think this would have been hard?

What would be the result if they obeyed (vs 7)?

What were they not to do (vs 8)?

How long were they going to be in Babylon (vs 10)?

What did God declare about His plans (vs 11)?

What did God want the people to do (vs 12-13)?

What would God do (vs 12-13)?

What was God's plan for them (vs 14)?

Why would this have been an encouraging message to the people?

What can you learn from this?

“Still Believing A Lie”

Study: Jeremiah 29:15-23

Reading: Matthew 7:15-20, 1 Timothy 6:3-10

Memory: Isaiah 40:27

When I was a child, my dad would have audio tapes of sermons by a well known preacher sent to him each week. This man was a very good and convincing speaker and had gained a large following. The way this man spoke and the way he carried himself created what could almost be called a cult like following. Many of his followers believed that anything this man said was true. The way in which he said things and the confidence he displayed convinced many that he was telling the truth. Though this man did speak many truthful things, there were many other things he said that weren't biblical truth and caused a great deal of harm to a great many people.

Today we are going to be reminded that it is easier to follow false teachers than we may realize. We will be reminded of the importance of seeking for and listening to the truth.

What Does the Bible Say?

Many of the Israelites had believed the false prophets in the land of Israel when they declared that destruction would not come. Destruction started to come and the words of the false prophets were proven to be untrue. Yet, those in captivity were still listening to the false prophets who were taken into captivity. These false prophets had declared that the captivity would be short which contradicted the words of Jeremiah who declared it would be for 70 years (vs 15).

Jeremiah told the captives that those who remained in Israel, including the king, would be subject to greater destruction through war, famine and pestilence. They would become like rotten figs which could not be eaten. They would not be an exalted nation, but would become a nation that was despised and one that was looked at with disgust. This was all going to happen because they chose not to pay attention to the words of God. Jeremiah, along with many other godly prophets, had delivered this message many times before, but he repeated it once again. The people chose not to listen to God and the prophets of God. They chose to reject

the Word of God in favor for messages that were more favorable in their eyes. They were now facing the consequences for their actions (vs 16-19).

God was now going to address the exiles which He sent away for the purpose of saving Israel. He planned to restore the nation many years down the road. Two specific prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah were mentioned as men who were not telling the truth. God was going to cause these men to face the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar and they were going to be killed as a result of their false messages. In the future, their names would be synonymous with a curse that the exiles would use. These men were going to suffer a terrible death by being roasted in a fiery furnace. They would face this punishment because they acted shamefully by committing adultery and speaking lies to the people declaring that God said things He never said. God was the One who knew what had happened and what would happen. He had witnessed all of their atrocities (vs 20-23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

At first glance it may seem amazing that the Israelites who went into captivity did not learn from their mistake of listening to the false prophets while in the land of Israel. Yet, this action by the Israelites reveals the natural desires of human nature. We as people often want to take the easiest paths in life and listen to things that fit in with our thinking or our desires. It is much easier to reject the truth than you may realize. It is very easy to want to think with your emotions rather than to think with your mind and evaluate what is true. It should have seemed obvious to others that Jeremiah had been right, but the people wanted so badly to believe the false prophets that they continually rejected the truth. The book of Proverbs is full of instruction to the simple minded, challenging them to choose to think and evaluate. The more you learn to think about things the way God thinks about them, the less likely you are to fall into the trap that the Israelites continually fell into.

Thought for the day

What had the people said (v 15)?

Why do you think the people desired to listen to the teaching of the false prophets?

What three groups of people are mentioned in verse 16?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What three things were going to happen to those remaining in the land of Israel (vs 17)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What was their destruction compared to (vs 17)?

How would other nations view Israel (vs 18)?

Why was God going to do this (vs 19)?

Who was Jeremiah addressing (vs 20)?

Why do you think Jeremiah mentioned the names of the two men (vs 21)?

What was going to happen to these men (vs 21)?

What curse would the exiles start using (vs 22)?

What do you think this meant?

What two things had these men done (vs 23)?

- 1.
- 2.

What did God declare about Himself (vs 23)?

Why is this so important to understand?

“The Lord of Hosts”

Study: Jeremiah 29:24-32

Reading: Acts 9:19-25, 1 Samuel 23:19-29

Memory: Isaiah 40:27

One of the things that bothers me on social media is when I see families or friends publicly post personal arguments for all to see. They will make comments about each other, sometimes naming names and other times giving clear indication of who they are talking about. The person who was being criticized will then often post something back to that person for all to see. Instead of dealing with the situation personally, it is thrown out there for everyone to see and the end result is that no one wins.

Today, we are going to see how public letters were being sent out from Jeremiah and the false prophets. Jeremiah was doing it because He was directed by God, while the false prophets were being directed by their own desires.

What Does the Bible Say?

Not everyone who had been taken to Babylon was wholesome and godly. Many had been involved in false teaching and pagan worship before the captivity and that would not have changed for most of them once they were in captivity. One of these men was named Shemaiah and Jeremiah wrote directly to him in the message he sent to the captives in Babylon. Jeremiah started his message describing God as the Lord of all heaven’s armies (Lord of hosts). God is described many times this way, indicating the fact that He was ruler over the greatest powers in the world and He was the One in control of all the events that were taking place. In this letter to Shemaiah, Jeremiah revealed that God knew that he had sent letters from Babylon to many of the leaders in Jerusalem and specifically to Zephaniah who had been given charge over the temple. It appears that Jehoiada had been in charge of the temple, but was probably taken away in captivity. Zephaniah was challenged to do his duty as priest and cast out the madmen who were prophesying negative things towards the Israelites. This was a clear reference to Jeremiah. Shemaiah instructed Zephaniah to put these madmen in stocks and chains. Shemaiah

specifically asked why Zephaniah hadn't rebuked Jeremiah for the prophecies that he had been delivering. Shemaiah believed that Jeremiah was feeding people false information. He was also disgusted with the fact that Jeremiah told the people to plan to be in exile for a long time (vs 24-28).

When Zephaniah received the letter, he read it in a place where Jeremiah could hear it being read. After Jeremiah heard the contents of the letter, God spoke to him and told him to send another letter to the exiles. This letter declared that Shemaiah was not a prophet of God and the prophecies that he was declaring were man made. As a result of his actions, Shemaiah and his descendants were going to be punished. He was going to lose his life and all of his descendants would die as well. There would be no one to continue his line since all of his children would be dead. None of them would be alive to see the return to Israel that God had planned for His children. This was his punishment for being a leader that chose to rebel against the Lord (vs 29-32).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God sees, hears and knows everything that takes place. Jeremiah made it clear to Shemaiah that God knew what he was up to and God didn't take kindly to the suggestions that were given to Zephaniah. God was taking care of Jeremiah through this whole process, even though the false prophets were out to do him harm. Though the corrupt leaders were trying to do everything in their power to stop Jeremiah, God was working on his behalf. This reminder of God's sovereignty can and should provide great comfort to you. You can trust that God is the "Lord of hosts" and that He is the One who is ultimately in charge of the events of the world.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God because He is watching out for you.*
- * *Ask God to help you to trust Him to care for you.*
- * Praise God because He is the "Lord of Hosts."

Thought for the day

Who was Jeremiah to write a letter to (vs 24)?

How did God describe Himself (vs 25)?

Why would Shemaiah have sent letters in his name (vs 25)?

Who did he send the letters to (vs 25)?

Why do you think he sent letters to multiple people (vs 25)?

What did Shemaiah say God had done (vs 26)?

Why do you think people invoke the name of God when they want their will done?

What did Shemaiah say Zephaniah had the responsibility to do (vs 26)?

What question did Zephaniah ask (vs 27)?

What had Jeremiah told the captives to do (vs 28)?

Why didn't Shemaiah like this message?

Where do you think Zephaniah read this letter (vs 29)?

Who could hear it being read (vs 29)?

What did God tell Jeremiah to do (vs 30-31)?

What did God say Shemaiah was doing (vs 31)?

How was God going to punish Shemaiah (vs 32)?

Why do you think his descendants would have to suffer?

What did God make clear the punishment was for (vs 32)?

What can you learn from this passage?

“A Hope”

Study: Jeremiah 30:1-24

Reading: 1 Peter 1:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Memory: Isaiah 40:27

What Does the Bible Say?

God once again spoke to Jeremiah and told him to write in a book the things that He had spoken to him. This is so the generations after him would have a copy of what God said would take place. Jeremiah would be dead far before the 70 years of exile would be over, and God wanted the Israelites in captivity to be reminded that He planned to restore them to the Promise Land (vs 1-3).

The message that was given was for both Israel and Judah. The message began with God declaring that a cry of panic had gone up from the Israelites. He compared it to the pains that women would experience when they were in labor, only these sounds were coming from men. This agony is pictured to occur in a day that was a great time of distress for all of Israel. It would be very difficult, but salvation would come from it. It is unclear exactly to what time period this is referring, but many commentators think that this is pointing to the great tribulation (vs 4-7).

In that day, God will break the yoke of burden the Israelites were forced to carry and they will no longer be subject to serve foreign nations. This will be a time where they will serve the Lord and the kingly line of David would once again be on the throne. This was a reference to the Messiah. They will no longer have to live in fear because they will be saved and returned to the land. They will live in peace and safety because God will be with them. No enemy will harm them or even make them afraid. Though the nations around them would be destroyed, Israel will be spared. This did not mean they would avoid punishment for their current sins, but did mean that God was not going to completely destroy them (vs 8-11).

Though this was going to take place in the future, their current situation was not so favorable. The pain that they were currently experiencing through captivity and destruction was difficult to bear. There was no one to comfort them or bring healing to them. All the foreign nations and foreign gods they had turned to had abandoned them, leaving

them to fend for themselves (vs 12-14).

The people were asked why they cried out because of their pain. Nothing could be done for them because God was punishing them for their sins. The only hope they had to cling to was the fact that those who hurt them would also experience destruction as well. One day all the oppressing nations will be destroyed allowing Israel to be restored to full health. It is then that their wounds will be healed. Though no other nation cared for them, God still cared and had great plans for future restoration (vs 15-17).

The cities that were destroyed and had become mounds of rubble will be rebuilt. The palace that housed the kings for many years will stand once again. From this restoration will come songs of thanksgiving and it will be a time of great celebration. Though the number of Israelites remaining after all the destruction by Babylon would be small, they wouldn't stay that way. God has multiplied them since the return and one day will greatly multiply His children (vs 18-20).

Their leader will not be from a foreign nation, but would be one of their own. He would be a leader that had the ability to approach God directly. It will be a time where the people will truly be the people of God. All this will be done by God after He unleashes His fury on his enemies and has accomplished His plan. This is something that the Israelites would have a hard time understanding. We as New Testament believers have a better understanding, but there is still much that we won't fully know until things happen (vs 21-24).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It has been quite a while since we read a prophecy concerning the end times, but you are once again reminded that God is a God of hope. What the Israelites were currently facing was very difficult and things were not going to get easier. Though God was going to punish them and they were going to suffer, He did not want them to be without hope. Though the New Testament church is distinct from Israel, we still have much of the same message of hope. The New Testament message is not directed towards a nation, but those who make up the body of Christ. The message given throughout the New Testament is one of hope, joy and peace in the middle of suffering. It is a message of future hope which reveals that all those who place their faith and trust in Jesus will be saved. This salvation results in deliverance from hell and also gives us an inheritance with God in heaven.

What was Jeremiah instructed to do (vs 2)?

What was God planning to do (vs 3)?

Why was this message for both Israel and Judah (vs 4)?

What does verse 5 picture?

What strange question is asked in verse 6? Why?

How is the period of time referenced in these verses described (vs 7)?

What will God do for Israel (vs 8)?

How were those Israelites going to be different (vs 9)?

Why weren't the Israelites to fear (vs 10)?

How was Israel going to be different than the other nations (vs 11)?

Why do you think that God mentioned the need for discipline (vs 11)?

What would the Israelites experience (vs 12)?

What could not be done (vs 13)?

Who had forgotten Israel (vs 14)? What do you think this meant?

Why would the people be crying (vs 15)?

What was going to happen to their enemies (vs 16)?

What was God going to do for His people (vs 17-18)?

What was going to come out of Israel (vs 19)?

Who was going to come from among them (vs 21)?

What is significant about verse 22?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"?"