

**Jeremiah,
God’s Suffering Servant
Lesson 11**

Key Verse

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be
compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

—Romans 8:18

Key Verse Thought: Read the key verse. Have you ever suffered? **Suffered** means “*endured affliction (hardships, troubles, misery, etc.)*.” This verse is comparing suffering here in this life with the eternal “glory” that we will know one day. (**Glory** means “*the ideal condition God created man –the condition that was lost in the fall, but that can be recovered in Jesus.*”) We will learn about a prophet who suffered greatly, yet remained faithful to God. He understood that sufferings now “are not worthy to be compared” to what we will be in heaven one day.

Emphasis: We are to be faithful to God (just like Jeremiah was) – no matter what “sufferings” we think we endure.

Lesson Summary: In our last lesson, as we began the book of Jeremiah, we learned that God knew him before he was even born. And that he would be a prophet to the nations! We read many of the words that Jeremiah spoke to God’s people, and even to the kings of Judah.

As we continue in our study of Jeremiah, we will read about some of his rejections and sufferings. We will begin to understand why Jeremiah is known as the “Weeping Prophet.” Jeremiah faithfully proclaimed God’s Words to the people, warning them of the coming destruction and captivity, if they did not repent and return to God. When the people failed to repent, God allowed the Babylonians to besiege them. Jeremiah witnessed the captivity of Judah by Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem, the city where God had chosen to place His name. Even through all of this, Jeremiah faithfully shared the Word of the Lord with the people. We will learn of God’s protection of Jeremiah, allowing him to remain in the land to continue delivering God’s Words to the remnant that was left behind.

God gave Jeremiah many words on the future of the nation Israel. We will look at a few of them today. He also reminded the people that God would keep His promise and send that Promised One, Jesus. See one of those promises. Jeremiah called Jesus the Branch of David. “**In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land**” (Jeremiah 33:15).

Tradition has it that Jeremiah was stoned to death.

Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson

- Monday: Jeremiah 27-31
- Tuesday: Jeremiah 32-36
- Wednesday: Jeremiah 37-40
- Thursday: Jeremiah 41-44
- Friday: Jeremiah 45-48
- Saturday: Jeremiah 49-52

Jeremiah **God's Suffering Servant**

1. Jeremiah's Rejection
 - His fellow priests reject his words from the Lord
 - The people reject his words from the Lord
2. Jeremiah's Sufferings
 - The "Weeping Prophet"
 - Jeremiah's imprisonments
3. Jeremiah's Continued Ministry
 - The fall of Jerusalem
 - The destruction of the Temple
 - Their hope
4. Jeremiah's Messages
 - To the Jews of the first captivity (Jeremiah 29)
 - To the poor remnant of the land (Jeremiah 40-42)
5. Jeremiah's Words of the Future
 - Restoration promised (Jeremiah 23)
 - Regarding the time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30)
 - On the Last Days (Jeremiah 31)

1. Jeremiah's Rejections

Remember what we read in our last lesson: “The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that *were* in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin” (Jeremiah 1:1). Jeremiah was from the lineage of the priests. You would think that the priests of God would want to work together to deliver the Word of God to His people. Jeremiah’s fellow priests rejected him.

7b. ... I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. 8. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. 9. 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*. 10. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. 11. But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: *their* everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. (Jeremiah 20:7b-11)

Notice: Jeremiah wanted to quit, but he just could not – for God’s Word was in his heart as a burning fire. See what else he had to say:

18b. ... then thou shewedst me their doings. 19. But I *was* like a lamb *or* an ox *that* is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, *saying*, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered. 20. But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause. 21. Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, *saying*, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand: (Jeremiah 11:18-21)

Note that these were his fellow priests that wanted to kill him! (Remember Jeremiah was of the priests that were in Anathoth.)

Remember something else we have learned. The people were just obeying King Josiah in following the Lord; they had not really meant it in their hearts. The following events take place after King Josiah died and Jehoiakim became king. See what happened to Jeremiah when he went to the Temple to speak to the people. Especially take note of the following:

8. Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, *saying*, Thou shalt surely die. 9. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, *saying*, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. 10. When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S *house*. 11.

Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears. (Jeremiah 26:8-11)

Notice that the priests and prophets wanted to kill him. When the princes came, the priest and prophets told them that Jeremiah was worthy to die. Notice something else:

12. Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. 13. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. 14. As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. 15. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears. (Jeremiah 26:12-15)

Jeremiah did not back down in fear from them. He knew the Lord had sent him with the words to speak. What confidence!

The people would not hear. “And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what *is* our iniquity? or what *is* our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?” (Jeremiah 16:10).

The people rejected Jeremiah’s words from the Lord. “Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words” (Jeremiah 18:18). They rejected his words so much that they wanted to harm him in some way.

Read that the nation as a whole rejected the words of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. “1. And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah” (Jeremiah 37:1-2).

2. Jeremiah’s Sufferings

Jeremiah is referred to as the “Weeping Prophet.” Read the following verses to see if you can understand just how he got that name:

Hear how sick to his heart Jeremiah is over Judah’s sin: “19. My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. 20. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment. 21. How long shall I see the standard, *and* hear the sound of the trumpet? 22. For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me; they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding: they *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jeremiah 4:19-22).

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet:

- “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” (Jeremiah 9:1).

- “But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD’S flock is carried away captive” (Jeremiah 13:17).
- “Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: *but* weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country” (Jeremiah 22:10).

Jeremiah put in the stocks: “1. Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD” (Jeremiah 20:1-2).

Jeremiah suffered in prison: “2. For then the king of Babylon’s army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was* in the king of Judah’s house. 3. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it” (Jeremiah 32:2-3).

Jeremiah falsely accused, and then imprisoned: “12. Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people. 13. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah ... and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. 14. Then said Jeremiah, *It is* false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. 15. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. 16. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; 17. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there *any* word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. 18. Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? 19. Where *are* now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? 20. Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. 21. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers’ street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison” (Jeremiah 37:12-21). The king secretly went to Jeremiah to hear a word from the Lord. Nevertheless, notice that Jeremiah’s message did not change just because he was in prison. He still declared the word of the Lord clearly to the king.

Jeremiah in the dungeon: “1. Then Shephatiah ... heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, 2. Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. 3. Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon’s army, which shall take it. 4. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he *is* in your hand: for the king *is* not *he that* can do *any* thing against you. 6. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon ... that *was* in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire” (Jeremiah 38:1-6). Jeremiah was put into a “dungeon” (probably an

empty cistern) where there was no water. “So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken” (Jeremiah 38:28).

Often, his life was in danger.

However, we never read that Jeremiah quit God.

A Deeper Path: We just think we suffer. We could never suffer as Jeremiah did – yet he remained faithful. Read the following verses. These verses are to help us in times that we feel that we are suffering. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us” (2 Timothy 2:12). See also: “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25). In addition: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled” (1 Peter 3:14).

3. Jeremiah’s Continued Ministry

Jeremiah had warned, but then he witnessed the fall of Jerusalem. “For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon” (Jeremiah 52:3). See also the following verses: “1. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. 2. *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up” (Jeremiah 39:1-2). In addition, read the following: “And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land” (Jeremiah 52:6). For sixteen months, Nebuchadnezzar and his army besieged Jerusalem before they took the city.

Do you remember what Jeremiah had told them to do? If they would go with the Babylonians (Chaldeans) they would live. If they resisted, they would die. When King Zedekiah saw the men of war, he and his men fled. The Chaldean army pursued and overtook them. “6. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. 7. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon” (Jeremiah 39:6-7). And read even more information in the following: “Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death” (Jeremiah 52:11). They proceeded to burn the king’s house and the houses of the people and broke the walls of Jerusalem.

And the people were carried captive. “9. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained. 10. But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time” (Jeremiah 39:9-10). Most of the people were taken prisoners, but there were a few left in the land. Read what happened to Jeremiah. “11. Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, 12. Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee. ... 14. Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah ... that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people” (Jeremiah 39:11-12, 14). God took care of Jeremiah. Not only was he released from prison, but he was carried home so he could live among the people. We need to look back to what God had promised Jeremiah. “The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee *well* in the time of evil and in the time of affliction” (Jeremiah 15:11). God told Jeremiah that the enemy would treat him well. And also remember what would happen to the false prophets. “Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and

famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed” (Jeremiah 14:15). God said the false prophets would be consumed.

Jeremiah wrote of the looting of the Temple:

17. Also the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon. 18. The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. 19. And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; *that* which *was* of gold *in* gold, and *that* which *was* of silver *in* silver, took the captain of the guard away. 20. The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that *were* under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. (Jeremiah 52:17-20)

They took anything of any value to Babylon. See what they did to the house of the Lord, the Temple. “And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great *men*, burned he with fire” (Jeremiah 52:13). Not only was the house of God robbed, but they burned it – along with the king’s house and many others. Especially notice what happened to the priests who were supposed to take care of the house of God and teach the people God’s Word. Especially notice the end of the king’s men.

24. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: 25. He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. 26. So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. 27. And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. (Jeremiah 52:24-27)

Nevertheless, God left hope.

When the people would call unto God, He would hear them – and forgive them.

3. Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. 8. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. 9. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. (Jeremiah 33:3, 8-9)

Again, we find a reminder of the promise of Jesus where He was called the Branch of David. “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land” (Jeremiah 33:15).

God gave words of encouragement to the people in captivity. Before they were carried away, God sent Jeremiah to remind them what the problem was (Jeremiah 25:1-6). Now he would tell them of the punishment:

7. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. 8. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, 9. Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. 11. And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:7-11)

Jeremiah told them it would be seventy years of captivity in Babylon. At the end of those years, God would deal with Babylon. “12. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. 13. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations” (Jeremiah 25:12-13).

A Deeper Path: Do you remember the warning God had given to them before they entered into the land? “26. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations; *neither* any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: ... 28. That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you” (Leviticus 18:26, 28). Because God’s people had failed to obey God’s commands, they were “spued out” of the land ... just like the nations before them.

4. Jeremiah’s Message

In our last lesson, we looked at several specific messages God gave Jeremiah for His people. Many of them were written as letters. Today we will look at a few of them.

Message: To the Jews of the first Captivity: Jeremiah 29

Read of the letter that Jeremiah sent to the Jews of the first captivity. “Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon” (Jeremiah 29:1). We understand this is the first carrying away of captives by Babylon. “(After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem)” (Jeremiah 29:2). Jeconiah here is Jehoiachin (see 2 Kings 24:12). Read the message. “4. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from

Jerusalem unto Babylon; 5. Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; 6. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. 7. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jeremiah 29:4-7). First, he wanted them to understand they would be there for a while, so they needed to take up residence. They were to build houses, plant gardens, get married, and have families. Most importantly, they were to pray unto the Lord. They were not to listen to the false prophets among them. “8. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that *be* in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. 9. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 29:8-9). They were to understand that they would be there for seventy years. After that seventy years, their discipline would end, and God would allow them to return back to the land God had promised them. “10. For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13. And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jeremiah 29:10-14). God loved His people and did not want them to have troubles, but the people needed to learn that they had to seek God with all of their hearts – and then they would find him. God had a plan and a reason for that captivity. (“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” Jeremiah 29:11.) We will learn that during their time in Babylon, God’s people were cured of worshipping idols – forever. They finally learned to seek the Lord only.

Message: To the poor remnant of the land: Jeremiah 40-42:

Jeremiah’s ministry to Jews after fall of Jerusalem in Judea

As we begin Jeremiah chapter forty, we find that inadvertently, Jeremiah has been bound and taken captive with the other people. The captain of the guard notices Jeremiah, and spoke to him. “2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. 3. Now the LORD hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.” (Jeremiah 40:2-3). This captain of the guard recognized God’s hand in the circumstances at hand. He understood God had allowed this captivity to take place. He then releases Jeremiah, and offers him the opportunity to continue on to Babylon with him where he would take good care of him. However, if he would rather, Jeremiah could return to his homeland. If Jeremiah wanted to return, the captain suggested he go to Gedaliah, the man appointed governor of the land. “... So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go” (Jeremiah 40:5b). God was continuing to take care of Jeremiah!

We then read of a conspiracy against Gedaliah (see it in Jeremiah 40:13-16). And the conspiracy fulfilled. “Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land” (Jeremiah 41:2). Ishmael and his men not only killed Gedaliah, the governor, but all of the Jews that were with him.

However, in Jeremiah chapter forty-two, we find the people asking Jeremiah to pray for them (see this in Jeremiah 42:1-3). Moreover, Jeremiah agreed to pray. “Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to

pass, *that* whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you; I will keep nothing back from you” (Jeremiah 42:4). After ten days, God answered him.

9. And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; 10. If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. 11. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12. And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. 13. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, 14. Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: 15. ... If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; 16. Then it shall come to pass, *that* the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. 17. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. (Jeremiah 42:9-17)

God told the people to stay there. They were not to fear the king of Babylon. God was with them. However, they wanted to go to Egypt, for they thought it was safe. God said they would die if they went. God knew what they would do. “20. For ye dissembled 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*. 21. And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath sent me unto you. 22. Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn” (Jeremiah 42:20-22). Guess what they did. “So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD ...” (Jeremiah 43:7). The people’s disobedience to God’s Word is why Jeremiah had a message for them in the land of Egypt (see this in Jeremiah 43:8-44:30).

A Deeper Path: In a few lessons, we will look at the instance when Daniel was reading Jeremiah’s prophecy and he understood that they would be in captivity in the land of Babylon for seventy years. “2. In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Daniel 9:2-3). It is rather nice that God allowed us to see one of the captives reading and *believing* the words that Jeremiah recorded – as God had asked Jeremiah to do! Those words must have been a great encouragement to Daniel when he was in a foreign land, far from home!

5. Jeremiah’s Word of the Future

Message: Restoration Promised: Jeremiah 23:

Read some words declaring the Promise of restoration and completion of the plan God had for them. “3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring

them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. 5. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8. But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jeremiah 23:3-8). This began to come to pass after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon. The people did return to their land. However, they were never established as a nation again – until the year 1948, when they were once again restored as a nation in their land. But because the Israelites rejected Jesus the first time He came (when he was born of Mary in Bethlehem), the Israelite people are still looking for their King to return to rule on the throne of David. Jesus will return one day to rule on the throne of David from Jerusalem. That has yet to be fulfilled.

Message: Regarding the time of Jacob’s Trouble: Jeremiah 30

This chapter too, promises a return out of captivity. “For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it” (Jeremiah 30:3). He proceeded to tell of a time called “Jacob’s trouble”, but that they would be saved out of it. “Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7). Compare this verse to Joel 2:31-32: “31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.” We understand that these will be days of great tribulation. But God will deliver them and even better: “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:9). God will not only restore them to the land and punish all that oppress them (see Jeremiah 30:10-21), but they will finally receive Jesus as their king. This day has not yet come, but when it does: “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 30:22).

God will not forget His people.

Message: On the Last Days: Jeremiah 31

To help us understand the timeframe of Jeremiah chapter thirty-one, we must read the last verse of Jeremiah chapter thirty. “The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done *it*, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it” (Jeremiah 30:24). Notice that this timeframe is “in the latter days.” **In the latter** means “*the last or end, hence the future.*” **At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people**” (Jeremiah 31:1). Since this begins Jeremiah chapter thirty-one, we understand these are events yet to be. We continue to find words of comfort, reminding God’s people that they belong to Him. God will restore them to their land and in their relationship with Him (see Jeremiah 31:1-14). God again reminded them of the promise to send Jesus (see Jeremiah 31:22). And God will make a new covenant with His people.

31. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband

unto them, saith the LORD: 33. But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

This new covenant with Judah and Israel is the hope of salvation through grace, not the law. These days have not come yet.

Reinforcement: In our study of Jeremiah, we found that the message God gave him was extremely difficult for him to deliver. Nevertheless, as we read today, Jeremiah was always faithful; even when he was beaten, imprisoned, and his fellow man rejected him. He was willing to “suffer” in his life to obey God’s command to deliver His message calling Judah to repent and return to God. Jeremiah had little, if any, hope of the possibility of God’s people truly repenting and returning to God, yet he faithfully delivered the messages God had. What courage! We learned that the people did not repent, so God allowed the enemy to destroy Jerusalem and take them captive. Jeremiah witnessed the destruction of his beloved city, and his people carried captive to a foreign land. Yet even through rejection and witnessing Jerusalem’s destruction and the people’s captivity, Jeremiah still mourned and prayed for his people. He even remained to encourage the few left in the land with God’s Words. Jeremiah should be a great example for us, today, to follow. In his faithfulness and courage, he should be an encouragement to us to faithfully witness to this world and share the message of hope – Jesus!

Closing: It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today’s lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today, pray that we remain faithful to God, no matter what suffering we think we may endure. Help us to be willing to tell others about Jesus – just as Jeremiah was faithful to deliver God’s message.*