

People of the Promise

Jeremiah: Warning, Weeping, and Hope

Jeremiah-Lamentations

Introduction

Jeremiah 1:1-10 Jeremiah's Call

¹ The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, ² to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³ It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶ Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."

⁷ But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD." ⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to

me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

"My identity does not begin when I begin to understand myself. There is something previous to what I think about myself, and it is what God thinks of me. That means that everything I think and feel is by nature a response, and the one to whom I respond is God. I never speak the first word. I never make the first move. Jeremiah's life didn't start with Jeremiah. Jeremiah's salvation did not start with Jeremiah. Jeremiah's truth did not start with Jeremiah. He entered the world in which the essential parts of his existence were already ancient history. So do we."
(Eugene Patterson, quoted by Ryken, 21.)

1. Warning

Jeremiah 2:11-13 Replacing God with Powerless Idols

¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. ¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, ¹³ for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out

cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Jeremiah 4:6-8 Babylonian Invasion from God

⁶ Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not, for I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction. ⁷ A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone out from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant. ⁸ For this put on sackcloth, lament and wail, for the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned back from us."

Jeremiah 5:30-31 Popular Lying Prophets and Priests

³⁰ An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: ³¹ the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?

Jeremiah 7:1-12 False Security of Hypocritical Worship

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD. ³ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. ⁴ Do not

trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'

5 "For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, **6** if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, **7** then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

8 "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. **9** Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, **10** and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations? **11** Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD. **12** Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.

Jeremiah 14:13-16 False Prophets

13 Then I said: "Ah, Lord GOD, behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" **14** And

the LORD said to me: "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. ¹⁵ Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name although I did not send them, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not come upon this land': By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed. ¹⁶ And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword, with none to bury them—they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their evil upon them.

Jeremiah 22:13-17, 30 Abusive King

¹³ "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages, ¹⁴ who says, 'I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms,' who cuts out windows for it, paneling it with cedar and painting it with vermilion. ¹⁵ Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. ¹⁶ He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the LORD. ¹⁷ But you have eyes

and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.”

30 Thus says the LORD: “Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.”

Jeremiah 23:23-32 Judgment on False Prophets

23 “Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? **24** Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. **25** I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ **26** How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, **27** who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? **28** Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. **29** Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? **30** Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal my words from one another. **31** Behold, I

am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, 'declares the LORD.' ³² Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 25:11-14 70-Year Captivity,
Punishment of Babylon

¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. ¹³ I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. ¹⁴ For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands."

2. Weeping

Jeremiah 8:18-22; 9:1 Unrepentant People
Doomed

18 My joy is gone; grief is upon me; my heart is sick within me. **19** Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" "Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?"

20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." **21** For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded; I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me. **22** Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?

9:1 Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Jeremiah 11:21-23 Persecution

21 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, or you will die by our hand"—

22 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: "Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, **23** and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment."

Jeremiah 14:17-18 National Devastation

17 "You shall say to them this word: 'Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease, for the virgin daughter of my people is shattered with a great wound, with a very grievous blow. **18** If I go out into the field, behold, those pierced by the sword! And if I enter the city, behold, the diseases of famine! For both prophet and priest ply their trade through the land and have no knowledge.'"

Jeremiah 15:15-21 Discouragement

15 O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach. **16** Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts. **17** I did not sit in the company of revelers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone, because your hand was upon me, for you had filled me with indignation. **18** Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail? **19** Therefore thus says the LORD: "If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth. They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them. **20** And I will

make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, declares the LORD. ²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.”

Jeremiah was disregarded, threatened with death, imprisoned, thrown into a mud-filled cistern—starvation, forced to go to Egypt

3. Hope

Jeremiah 3:12-18 Repentance and Restoration

¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. ¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. ¹⁴ Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶ And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in

those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. ¹⁸ In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 The Glory of Knowing Yahweh

²³ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 16:14-15, 19-21 Many Nations Rescued from Idols

¹⁴ "Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' ¹⁵ but 'As the LORD lives who brought up the

people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.

19 O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: "Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit. **20** Can man make for himself gods? Such are not gods!" **21** "Therefore, behold, I will make them know, this once I will make them know my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the LORD."

Jeremiah 17:5-8 Fruitfulness of Trust in Yahweh

5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. **6** He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. **7** "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. **8** He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Jeremiah 18:1-11 Sovereign Power to Reward Repentance

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. ¹¹ Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: 'Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.'

Jeremiah 23:5-6 The Coming Savior-King

⁵ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"

Jeremiah 29:4-7 Thriving in a Foreign Land

⁴ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 The New Covenant

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will

make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Conclusion

Warning, Weeping, and Hope

Lamentations 3:19-26

¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!
²⁰ My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. ²¹ But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: ²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.