



Jeremiah

Receives God's Endurance

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Overview

JEREMIAHEMIAH DEPENDED ON GOD'S LOVE AS HE DEVELOPED ENDURENCE

Jeremiah story is told in the book of Jeremiah. He is also mentioned in Ezra 1:1; Daniel 9:2; Matthew 2:17; Matthew 16:14; Matthew 27:9. See also 2 Chron. 34-35 for the story of the spiritual revival under Josiah.

Endurance is not a common quality. Many people lack the long-term commitment, caring, and willingness that are vital to sticking with a task against all odds. But Jeremiah was a prophet who endured.

Jeremiah call by God teaches how intimately God knows us. He valued us before anyone else knew we would exist. He cared for us while we were in our mother's womb. He planned our lives while our bodies were still being formed. He values us more highly than we value ourselves.

Jeremiah had to depend on God's love as he developed endurance. His audiences were usually antagonistic or apathetic to his messages. He was ignored; his life was often threatened. He saw both the excitement of a spiritual awakening and the sorrow of a national return to idolatry.

With the exception of the good King Josiah, Jeremiah watched king after king ignore his warnings and lead the people away from God. He saw fellow prophets murdered. He himself was severely persecuted. Finally, he watched Judah's defeat at the hands of the Babylonians.

Jeremiah responded to all this with Gods message and human tears. He felt firsthand God's love for his people and the people's rejection of that love. But even when he was angry with God and tempted to give up, Jeremiah knew he had to keep going. God had called him to endure.

He expressed intense feelings, but he also saw beyond the feelings to the God who was soon to execute justice, but who afterward would administer mercy.

Jeremiah A Priest

Jeremiah 1:1

These are the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests from Anathoth, a town in the land of Benjamin.

After King Solomon's death, the united kingdom of Israel had split into rival northern and southern kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel; the southern, Judah. Jeremiah was from Anathoth, four miles north of Jerusalem in the southern kingdom. He lived and prophesied during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah. This was a chaotic time politically, morally, and spiritually.

As Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria battled for world supremacy, Judah found itself caught in the middle of the triangle. Although Jeremiah prophesied for 40 years, he never saw his people heed his words and turn from their sins.

Call of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:4-19

The Lord gave me a message. He said, "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world."

"O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!"

Don't say that," the Lord replied, "for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you.

And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and take care of you. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Then the Lord touched my mouth and said, "See, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. You are to uproot some and tear them down, to destroy and overthrow them. You are to build others up and plant them."

Then the Lord said to me, "Look, Jeremiah! What do you see?"

And I replied, "I see a branch from an almond tree."

And the Lord said, "That's right, and it means that I am watching, and I will surely carry out my threats of punishment."

Then the Lord spoke to me again and asked, "What do you see now?"

And I replied, "I see a pot of boiling water, tipping from the north."

"Yes," the Lord said, "for terror from the north will boil out on the people of this land. Listen! I am calling the armies of the kingdoms of the north to come to Jerusalem. They will set their thrones at the gates of the city. They will attack its walls and all the other towns of Judah.

I will pronounce judgment on my people for all their evil—for deserting me and worshiping other gods. Yes, they worship idols that they themselves have made!

"Get up and get dressed. Go out, and tell them whatever I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, or I will make you look foolish in front of them.

For see, today I have made you immune to their attacks. You are strong like a fortified city that cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall. None of the kings, officials, priests, or people of Judah will be able to stand against you.

They will try, but they will fail. For I am with you, and I will take care of you. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Scripture Review

God knew you, as he knew Jeremiah, long before you were born or even conceived. He thought about you and planned for you. When you feel discouraged or inadequate, remember that God has always thought of you as valuable and that he has a purpose in mind for you.

Jeremiah was "appointed" by God "as a prophet to the nations." God has a purpose for each Christian, but some people are appointed by God for specific kinds of work. Samson (Judges 13:3-5), David (1 Samuel 16:12-13), John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17), and Paul (Galatians 1:15-16) were also called to do particular jobs for God.

Whatever work you do should be done for the glory of God (Phil. 1:11). If God gives you a specific task, accept it cheerfully and do it with diligence. If God has not given you a specific call or assignment, then seek to fulfill the mission common to all believers—to love, obey, and serve God—until his guidance becomes more clear.

Often people struggle with new challenges because they lack self-confidence, feeling that they have inadequate ability, training, or experience. Jeremiah thought he was “only a child”—too young and inexperienced to be God’s spokesman to the world. But God promised to be with him. We should not allow feelings of inadequacy to keep us from obeying God’s call. He will *always* be with us. When you find yourself avoiding something you know you should do, be careful not to use lack of self-confidence as an excuse. If God gives you a job to do, he will provide all you need to do it.

God promised to “rescue” Jeremiah from trouble, not to keep trouble from coming. God did not insulate him from jailings, deportation, or insults. God does not keep us from encountering life’s storms, but he will see us through them. In fact, God walks through these storms with us and rescues us.

God appointed Jeremiah to bring his word to “nations and kingdoms.” Jeremiah’s work was to warn not only the Jews but all the nations of the world about God’s judgment on sin. Don’t forget in reading the Old Testament that, while God was consistently working through the people of Judah and Israel, his plan was to communicate to every nation and person. We are included in Jeremiah’s message of judgment and hope, and as believers we are to share God’s desire to reach the whole world for him.

The vision of the branch of an almond tree revealed the beginning of God’s judgment because the almond tree is among the first to blossom in the spring. God saw the sins of Judah and the nations, and he would carry out swift and certain judgment. The boiling pot tilting away from the north and spilling over Judah pictured Babylon delivering God’s scalding judgment against Jeremiah’s people.

The problems we face may not seem as ominous as Jeremiah’s, but they are critical to us and may overwhelm us! God’s promise to Jeremiah and to us is that nothing will defeat us completely; he will help us through the most agonizing problems. Face each day with the assurance that God will be with you and see you through.

The people of Judah sinned greatly by continuing to burn incense to and worship other gods. God had commanded them specifically against this (Exodus 20:3-6) because idolatry places trust in created things rather than the Creator. Although these people belonged to God, they chose to follow false gods. Many “gods” entice us to turn away from God.

Material possessions, dreams for the future, approval of others, and vocational goals compete for our total commitment. Striving after these at the expense of our commitment to God puts our heart where Judah’s was—and God severely punished Judah.

Time of his prophecies

Jeremiah 3:6

During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, "Have you seen what fickle Israel does? Like a wife who commits adultery, Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill and under every green tree.

The northern kingdom, Israel, had fallen to Assyria, and its people had been taken into captivity. The tragic lesson of their fall should have caused the southern kingdom, Judah, to return to God, but Judah paid no attention. Jeremiah urged Judah to return to God to avoid certain disaster.

This message came between 627 and 621 B.C., during Josiah’s reign. Although Josiah obeyed God’s commands, his example apparently did not penetrate the hearts of the people. If the people refused to repent, God said he would destroy the nation because of the evils of Josiah’s grandfather, King Manasseh (2 Kings 23:25-27).

Jeremiah 21:1

The Lord spoke through Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, the priest, to speak with him. They begged Jeremiah,

Jeremiah 21-28 are Jeremiah's messages concerning Nebuchadnezzar's attacks on Jerusalem between 588 and 586 B.C. (see also 2 Kings 25). King Zedekiah decided to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:20), and the nobles advised allying with Egypt. Jeremiah pronounced judgment on the kings (Jeremiah 21:1-23:8) and false prophets (Jeremiah 23:9-40) for leading the people astray.

King Zedekiah probably was referring to God's deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in the days of Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-37). But Zedekiah's hopes were dashed. He was Judah's last ruler during the time of the exile of 586 B.C.

Pashhur came to the prophet for help. (This is not the same Pashhur as in Jeremiah 20:1.) God still had work for Jeremiah to do. In living out our faith, we may find that rejection, disappointment, or hard work has brought us to the point of despondency. But we are still needed. God has important work for us as well.

Jeremiah had foretold Jerusalem's destruction. The city's leaders had denied his word and mocked his announcements. In desperation, King Zedekiah turned to God for help, but without acknowledging God's warnings or admitting his sin. Too often we expect God to help us in our time of trouble even though we have ignored him in our time of prosperity.

But God wants a lasting relationship. Are you trying to build a lasting friendship with God, or are you merely using him occasionally to escape trouble? What would you think of your family or friends if they thought of you only as a temporary resource?

Jeremiah 24:1

After King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon exiled Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, to Babylon along with the princes of Judah and all the skilled craftsmen, the Lord gave me this vision. I saw two baskets of figs placed in front of the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem.

This happened in 597 B.C. Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon, and Zedekiah became king. Often royal officials were exiled to keep them from exerting power and starting a rebellion. Skilled craftsmen and artisans were taken because they were valuable for Babylon's building program. Jeremiah foretold this event in Jeremiah

Jeremiah 25:1-3

This message for all the people of Judah came to Jeremiah from the Lord during the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign over Judah. This was the year when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon began his reign.

Jeremiah the prophet said to the people in Judah and Jerusalem, "For the past twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, until now—the Lord has been giving me his messages. I have faithfully passed them on to you, but you have not listened.

The beginning of Jeremiah's ministry was in 627 B.C. He predicted the 70 years of captivity a full 20 years before it began.

Imagine preaching the same message for 23 years and continually being rejected! Jeremiah faced this; but because he had committed his life to God, he continued to proclaim the message—"Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices." Regardless of the people's response, Jeremiah did not give up.

God never stops loving us, even when we reject him. We can thank God that he won't give up on us, and, like Jeremiah, we can commit ourselves to never forsaking him. No matter how people respond when you tell them about God, remain faithful to God's high call and continue to witness for him.

Jeremiah 26:1

This message came to Jeremiah from the Lord early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah.

The events described in this chapter took place in 609—608 B.C., before the events described in Jeremiah 25. Jehoiakim was a materialistic and self-centered king who persecuted and murdered innocent people (Jeremiah 36:22-32; 2 Kings 23:36-24:6). Jeremiah 26 describes how and why Jeremiah was on trial for his life.

Jeremiah 28:1

One day in late summer of that same year—the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah—Hananiah son of Azur, a prophet from Gibeon, addressed me publicly in the Temple while all the priests and people listened. He said,

Jeremiah 32:1

The following message came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. This was also the eighteenth year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar.

God told Jeremiah to buy a field outside Jerusalem. The city had been under siege for a year, and Jeremiah bought land that the soldiers occupied—certainly a poor investment. In addition, Jeremiah was a prisoner in the palace. But Jeremiah was demonstrating his faith in God's promises to bring his people back and to rebuild Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 34:1

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with all the armies from the kingdoms he ruled, and he fought against Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. At that time this message came to Jeremiah from the Lord:

This chapter describes the fulfillment of many of Jeremiah's predictions. In the book of Jeremiah, many prophecies were both given and quickly fulfilled.

Jeremiah 45:1

The prophet Jeremiah gave a message to Baruch son of Neriah in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, after Baruch had written down everything Jeremiah had dictated to him. He said,

The event relating to this chapter is recorded in Jeremiah 36:1-8. The chapter was written in 605—604 B.C. Baruch was the scribe who recorded Jeremiah's words on a scroll.

Jeremiah 49:34

This message concerning Elam came to the prophet Jeremiah from the Lord at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah.

Elam lay east of Babylon and was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. Later Elam became the nucleus of the Persian empire (Daniel 8:2) and the residence of Darius.

Letter to the captives in Babylon

Jeremiah 29

The written word of God is as truly given by inspiration of God as his spoken word. The zealous servant of the Lord will use every means to profit those who are far off, as well as those who are near him.

In the second judgment, Jeremiah foretells judgments upon the false prophets, who deceived the Jews in Babylon. Lying was bad; lying to the people of the Lord, to delude them into a false hope, was worse; but pretending to rest their own lies upon the God of truth, was worst of all.

They flattered others in their sins, because they could not reprove them without condemning themselves.

Sorrow of Jeremiah under persecution

Jeremiah 15:10

Then I said, "What sadness is mine, my mother. Oh, that I had died at birth! I am hated everywhere I go. I am neither a lender who has threatened to foreclose nor a borrower who refuses to pay—yet they all curse me."

This section opens with God sending a drought on Judah and refusing to answer their prayers for rain. It continues with Jeremiah's description of judgment to come.

Jeremiah 15:15

Then I said, "Lord, you know I am suffering for your sake. Punish my persecutors! Don't let them kill me! Be merciful to me and give them what they deserve!"

Jeremiah 17:15-18

People scoff at me and say, "What is this 'message from the Lord' you keep talking about? Why don't your predictions come true?"

Lord, I have not abandoned my job as a shepherd for your people. I have not urged you to send disaster. It is your message I have given them, not my own.

Lord, do not desert me now! You alone are my hope in the day of disaster. Bring shame and terror on all who persecute me, but give me peace. Yes, bring double destruction upon them!

This section portrays the coming day of disaster. It begins by showing Jeremiah's loneliness. He is a social outcast because of his harsh messages and his celibate life-style. He must not marry, have children, or take part in funerals or festivals. The section concludes with another appeal to avoid judgment by turning to God.

The people did not heed Jeremiah's words, however, and the first wave of destruction came almost immediately, in 605 B.C. (2 Kings 24:8-12). The second wave came in 597 B.C., and Judah was completely destroyed in 586 B.C.

Conspiracy against Jeremiah

Jeremiah 11:21-23

The men of Anathoth wanted me dead. They said they would kill me if I did not stop speaking in the Lord's name. So this is what the Lord Almighty says about them: "I will punish them! Their young men will die in battle, and their little boys and girls will starve.

Not one of these plotters from Anathoth will survive, for I will bring disaster upon them when their time of punishment comes."

To Jeremiah's surprise, the people of Anathoth, his hometown, were plotting to kill him. They wanted to silence Jeremiah's message for several reasons:

- (1) economic—his condemnation of idol worship would hurt the business of the idol-makers;
- (2) religious—the message of doom and gloom made the people feel depressed and guilty;
- (3) political—he openly rebuked their hypocritical politics; and
- (4) personal—the people hated him for showing them that they were wrong.

Jeremiah had two options: run and hide, or call on God. Jeremiah called, and God answered. Like Jeremiah, we can either run and hide when we face threats because of our faithfulness to God, or we can call on God for help. Hiding compromises our message; calling on God lets him reinforce it.

Jeremiah 18:18-23

Then the people said, "Come on, let's find a way to stop Jeremiah. We have our own priests and wise men and prophets. We don't need him to teach the law and give us advice and prophecies. Let's spread rumors about him and ignore what he says."

Lord, help me! Listen to what they are planning to do to me! [20] Should they repay evil for good? They have set a trap to kill me, though I pleaded for them and tried to protect them from your anger.

So let their children starve! Let the sword pour out their blood! Let their wives become widows without any children! Let their old men die in a plague, and let their young men be killed in battle!

Let screaming be heard from their homes as warriors come suddenly upon them. For they have dug a pit for me, and they have hidden traps along my path.

Lord, you know all about their murderous plots against me. Don't forgive their crimes and blot out their sins. Let them die before you. Deal with them in your anger.

Jeremiah's words and actions challenged the people's social and moral behavior. He had openly spoken against the king, the officials, the priests and prophets, the scribes, and the wise (Jeremiah 4:9; Jeremiah 8:8-9).

He wasn't afraid to give unpopular criticism. The people could either obey him or silence him. They chose the latter. They did not think they needed Jeremiah; their false prophets told them what they wanted to hear. How do you respond to criticism? Listen carefully—God may be trying to tell you something.

Foretells the desolation of Jerusalem

Jeremiah 19

The prophet must give notice of ruin coming upon Judah and Jerusalem. Both rulers and ruled must attend to it. That place which holiness made the joy of the whole earth, sin made the reproach and shame of the whole earth.

Pashur, the governor of the temple, scourges and casts him into prison

Jeremiah 20:1-2

Now Pashhur son of Immer, the priest in charge of the Temple of the Lord, heard what Jeremiah was saying.

So he arrested Jeremiah the prophet and had him whipped and put in stocks at the Benjamin Gate of the Lord's Temple.

This event took place during the reign of Jehoiakim of Judah. Jeremiah preached at the Valley of Ben Hinnom, the center of idolatry in the city. He also preached in the temple, which should have been the center of true worship. Both places attracted many people; both were places of false worship.

Pashhur was the official in charge of maintaining order in the temple (see Jeremiah 29:26 for a description of the responsibility). He was also a priest and had pretended to be a prophet. After hearing Jeremiah's words, Pashhur had him beaten and put in the stocks (locked up) instead of taking his message to heart and acting on it.

The truth sometimes stings, but our reaction to the truth shows what we are made of. We can deny the charges and destroy evidence of our misdeeds, or we can take the truth humbly to heart and let it change us. Pashhur may have thought he was a strong leader, but he was really a coward.

Denounces Pashur

Jeremiah 20:3-6

The next day, when Pashhur finally released him, Jeremiah said, "Pashhur, the Lord has changed your name. From now on you are to be called 'The Man Who Lives in Terror.'

For this is what the Lord says: I will send terror upon you and all your friends, and you will watch as they are slaughtered by the swords of the enemy. I will hand the people of Judah over to the king of Babylon. He will take them captive to Babylon or run them through with the sword.

And I will let your enemies plunder Jerusalem. All the famed treasures of the city—the precious jewels and gold and silver of your kings—will be carried off to Babylon.

As for you, Pashhur, you and all your household will go as captives to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you promised that everything would be all right."

This prophecy of destruction came true in three waves of invasion by Babylon. The first wave happened within the year (605 B.C.). Pashhur was probably exiled to Babylon during the second wave in 597 B.C. when Jehoiachin was taken captive. The third invasion occurred in 586 B.C.

His melancholy and complaints against God, in consequence of persecution

Jeremiah 20:7-18

O Lord, you persuaded me, and I allowed myself to be persuaded. You are stronger than I am, and you overpowered me. Now I am mocked by everyone in the city. Whenever I speak, the words come out in a violent outburst. "Violence and

destruction!" I shout. So these messages from the Lord have made me a household joke.

And I can't stop! If I say I'll never mention the Lord or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am weary of holding it in!

I have heard the many rumors about me. They call me "The Man Who Lives in Terror." And they say, "If you say anything, we will report it." Even my old friends are watching me, waiting for a fatal slip. "He will trap himself," they say, "and then we will get our revenge on him."

But the Lord stands beside me like a great warrior. Before him they will stumble. They cannot defeat me. They will be shamed and thoroughly humiliated. Their dishonor will never be forgotten.

O Lord Almighty! You know those who are righteous, and you examine the deepest thoughts of hearts and minds. Let me see your vengeance against them, for I have committed my cause to you.

Now I will sing out my thanks to the Lord! Praise the Lord! For though I was poor and needy, he delivered me from my oppressors.

Yet I curse the day I was born! May the day of my birth not be blessed. I curse the messenger who told my father, "Good news—you have a son!" Let him be destroyed like the cities of old that the Lord overthrew without mercy.

Terrify him all day long with battle shouts, for he did not kill me at birth. Oh, that I had died in my mother's womb, that her body had been my grave! Why was I ever born? My entire life has been filled with trouble, sorrow, and shame.

Jeremiah cried out in despair mixed with praise, unburdening his heart to God. He had faithfully proclaimed God's word and had received nothing in return but persecution and sorrow. Yet when he withheld God's word for a while, it became fire in his bones until he could hold it back no longer. When God's living message of forgiveness becomes fire in your bones, you also will feel compelled to share it with others, regardless of the results.

Imprisoned by Zedekiah

Jeremiah 32

Jeremiah, being in prison for his prophecy, purchased a piece of ground. This was to signify, that though Jerusalem was besieged, and the whole country likely to be laid waste, yet the time would come, when houses, and fields, and vineyards, should be again possessed.

Jeremiah 33:1

While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the Lord gave him this second message:

God would restore Jerusalem, not because the people cried, but because it was part of his ultimate plan. The Babylonian disaster did not change God's purposes for his people. Although Jerusalem would be destroyed, it would be restored (after the 70-year captivity and in the end times when the Messiah will rule). God's justice is always tempered by his mercy.

Jeremiah 37:15-21

They were furious with Jeremiah and had him flogged and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary. Jonathan's house had been converted into a prison. Jeremiah was put into a dungeon cell, where he remained for many days.

Later King Zedekiah secretly requested that Jeremiah come to the palace, where the king asked him, "Do you have any messages from the Lord?"

"Yes, I do!" said Jeremiah. "You will be defeated by the king of Babylon."

Then Jeremiah asked the king, "What crime have I committed? What have I done against you, your officials, or the people that I should be imprisoned like this?"

Where your prophets now who told you the king of Babylon are would not attack you? Listen, my lord the king, I beg you. Don't send me back to the dungeon in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for I will die there."

So King Zedekiah commanded that Jeremiah not be returned to the dungeon. Instead, he was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace. The king also commanded that Jeremiah be given a loaf of fresh bread every day as long as there was any left in the city. So Jeremiah was put in the palace prison.

Zedekiah teetered between surrender and resistance. Too frightened and weak to exercise authority, he asked Jeremiah to come secretly to the palace, perhaps hoping for some better news from God. Zedekiah was desperate; he wanted to hear a word from the Lord, but he feared the political ramifications of being caught talking to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 38:6-13

So the officials took Jeremiah from his cell and lowered him by ropes into an empty cistern in the prison yard. It belonged to Malkijah, a member of the royal family. There was no water in the cistern, but there was a thick layer of mud at the bottom, and Jeremiah sank down into it.

But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, an important palace official, heard that Jeremiah was in the cistern. At that time the king was holding court at the Benjamin Gate, so Ebed-melech rushed from the palace to speak with him.

"My lord the king," he said, "these men have done a very evil thing in putting Jeremiah the prophet into the cistern. He will soon die of hunger, for almost all the bread in the city is gone."

So the king told Ebed-melech, "Take along thirty of my men, and pull Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies."

So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to a room in the palace beneath the treasury, where he found some old rags and discarded clothing. He carried these to the cistern and lowered them to Jeremiah on a rope.

Ebed-melech called down to Jeremiah, "Put these rags under your armpits to protect you from the ropes." Then when Jeremiah was ready,

they pulled him out. So Jeremiah was returned to the courtyard of the guard—the palace prison—where he remained.

Officials put Jeremiah in a cistern to kill him. A cistern was a large hole in the ground lined with rocks to collect rainwater. The bottom would have been dark, damp, and, in this case, full of mud. Jeremiah could drown, die of exposure, or starve to death in the cistern.

38:6 Judah's leaders persecuted Jeremiah repeatedly for faithfully proclaiming God's messages. For 40 years of faithful ministry, he received no acclaim, no love, no popular following. He was beaten, jailed, threatened, and even forced to leave his homeland.

Only the pagan Babylonians showed him any respect (Jeremiah 39:11-12). God does not guarantee that his servants will escape persecution, even when they are faithful. But God does promise that he will be with them and will give them strength to endure (2 Cor. 1:3-7).

As you minister to others, recognize that your service is for God and not just for human approval. God rewards our faithfulness, but not always during our stay on earth.

The Benjamin Gate was one of Jerusalem's city gates where legal matters were handled. A palace official, Ebed-Melech, had access to the king. When Ebed-Melech heard of Jeremiah's plight, he went immediately to deal with the injustice.

Ebed-Melech feared God more than man. He alone among the palace officials stood up against the murder plot. His obedience could have cost him his life. Because he obeyed, however, he was spared when Jerusalem fell (Jeremiah 39:15-18).

You can either go along with the crowd or speak up for God. When someone is treated unkindly or unjustly, for example, reach out to that person with God's love. You may be the only one who does. And, when you are being treated unkindly yourself, be sure to thank God when he sends an "Ebed-Melech" your way.

Jeremiah 39:15-18

The Lord had given the following message to Jeremiah while he was still in prison: "Say to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, 'The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will do to this city everything I have threatened.

I will send disaster, not prosperity. You will see its destruction, but I will rescue you from those you fear so much. Because you trusted me, I will preserve your life and keep you safe. I, the Lord, have spoken!" "

Ebed-Melech had risked his life to save God's prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:7-13). When Babylon conquered Jerusalem, God protected Ebed-Melech from the Babylonians. God has special rewards for his faithful people, but not everyone will receive them in this life (see the note on +Jeremiah 38:6).

Lamentations 3:53-55

They threw me into a pit and dropped stones on me. The water flowed above my head, and I cried out, "This is the end!"

But I called on your name, Lord, from deep within the well,

At one point in his ministry, Jeremiah was thrown into an empty cistern, and he was left to die in the mire at the bottom (Jeremiah 38:6-13). But God rescued him. Jeremiah used this experience as a picture of the nation sinking into sin. If they turned to God, he would rescue them.

Nebuchadnezzar directs the release of

Jeremiah 39:11-14

King Nebuchadnezzar had told Nebuzaradan to find Jeremiah. "See that he isn't hurt," he had said. "Look after him well, and give him anything he wants."

So Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, and Nebushazban, a chief officer, and Nergal-sharezer, the king's adviser, and the other officers of Babylon's king sent messengers to bring Jeremiah out of the prison.

They put him under the care of Gedaliah son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, who was to take him back to his home. So Jeremiah stayed in Judah among his own people.

God had promised to rescue Jeremiah from his trouble (Jeremiah 1:8). The superstitious Babylonians, who highly respected magicians and fortune-tellers,

treated Jeremiah as a seer. Because he had been imprisoned by his own people, they assumed he was a traitor and on their side. They undoubtedly knew he had counseled cooperation with Babylon and predicted a Babylonian victory. So the Babylonians freed Jeremiah and protected him.

What a difference there is between Jeremiah's fate and Zedekiah's! Jeremiah was freed; Zedekiah was imprisoned. Jeremiah was saved because of his faith; Zedekiah was destroyed because of his fear. Jeremiah was treated with respect; Zedekiah was treated with contempt. Jeremiah was concerned for the people; Zedekiah was concerned for himself.

Jeremiah 40:1-4

Hear the word of the Lord, O Israel! This is what the Lord says: "Do not act like other nations who try to read their future in the stars. Do not be afraid of their predictions, even though other nations are terrified by them.

Their ways are futile and foolish. They cut down a tree and carve an idol. They decorate it with gold and silver and then fasten it securely with hammer and nails so it won't fall over.

The Babylonian commander, who did not know God, acknowledged that God had given the Babylonians victory. It is strange when people recognize that God exists and does miracles, but still they do not personally accept him. Knowing God is more than knowing about him. Be sure you know him personally.

Jeremiah was free to go anywhere. In Babylon he would have had great comfort and power. In Judah he would continue to face hardship. In Babylon Jeremiah would have been favored by the Babylonians, but hated by the Judean exiles.

In Judah he would remain poor and unwanted, but the Judean remnant would know he was not a traitor. Jeremiah returned to Judah.

Has a friend in Ahikam

Jeremiah 26:24

Ahikam son of Shaphan also stood with Jeremiah and persuaded the court not to turn him over to the mob to be killed.

Prophecies of Jeremiah written by Baruch

Jeremiah 36:1-7

During the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king in Judah, the Lord gave this message to Jeremiah: "Get a scroll, and write down all my messages against Israel, Judah, and the other nations.

Begin with the first message back in the days of Josiah, and write down every message you have given, right up to the present time.

Perhaps the people of Judah will repent if they see in writing all the terrible things I have planned for them. Then I will be able to forgive their sins and wrongdoings."

So Jeremiah sent for Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote down all the prophecies that the Lord had given him.

Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, "I am a prisoner here and unable to go to the Temple. So you go to the Temple on the next day of fasting, and read the messages from the Lord that are on this scroll. On that day people will be there from all over Judah.

Perhaps even yet they will turn from their evil ways and ask the Lord's forgiveness before it is too late. For the Lord's terrible anger has been pronounced against them."

Most people in ancient times could neither read nor write, so those who could were extremely valuable. These scribes held positions of great importance and were very respected for their knowledge. Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe.

Writing was often done on vellum or papyrus sheets that were sewn or glued together and stored in long rolls called scrolls. After the exile, scribes became teachers of the law. In New Testament times, the scribes formed a powerful political party.

Jeremiah 36:32

Then Jeremiah took another scroll and dictated again to his secretary Baruch. He wrote everything that had been on the scroll King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. Only this time, he added much more!

God told Jeremiah to write his words on a scroll. Because he was not allowed to go to the temple, Jeremiah asked his scribe, Baruch, to whom he had dictated the scroll to read it to the people gathered there. Baruch then read it to the officials, and finally Jehudi read it to the king himself. Although the king burned the scroll, he could not destroy the word of God. Today many people try to put God's Word aside or say that it contains errors and therefore cannot be trusted.

People may reject God's Word, but they cannot destroy it. God's Word will stand forever (Psalm 119:89).

Jeremiah 45:1

The prophet Jeremiah gave a message to Baruch son of Neriah in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, after Baruch had written down everything Jeremiah had dictated to him. He said,

The chapter was written in 605—604 B.C. Baruch was the scribe who recorded Jeremiah's words on a scroll.

Prophecies of Jeremiah destroyed by Jehoiakim

Jeremiah 36:8-32

Baruch did as Jeremiah told him and read these messages from the Lord to the people at the Temple. This happened on the day of sacred fasting held in late autumn, during the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah. People from all over Judah came to attend the services at the Temple on that day.

Baruch read Jeremiah's words to all the people from the Temple room of Gemariah son of Shaphan. This room was just off the upper courtyard of the Temple, near the New Gate entrance.

When Micaiah son of Gemariah and grandson of Shaphan heard the messages from the Lord, he went down to the secretary's room in the palace where the administrative officials were meeting. Elishama the secretary was there, along with Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan,

Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the others with official responsibilities.

When Micaiah told them about the messages Baruch was reading to the people, the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, grandson of Shelemiah, and great-grandson of Cushi, to ask Baruch to come and read the messages to them, too. So Baruch took the scroll and went to them.

"Sit down and read the scroll to us," the officials said, and Baruch did as they requested.

By the time Baruch had finished reading, they were badly frightened. "We must tell the king what we have heard," they said. "But first, tell us how you got these messages. Did they come directly from Jeremiah?"

So Baruch explained, "Jeremiah dictated them to me word by word, and I wrote down his words with ink on this scroll."

"You and Jeremiah should both hide," the officials told Baruch. "Don't tell anyone where you are!" [20] Then the officials left the scroll for safekeeping in the room of Elishama the secretary and went to tell the king.

The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it from Elishama's room and read it to the king as all his officials stood by.

It was late autumn, and the king was in a winterized part of the palace, sitting in front of a fire to keep warm.

Whenever Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king took his knife and cut off that section of the scroll. He then threw it into the fire, section by section, until the whole scroll was burned up.

Neither the king nor his officials showed any signs of fear or repentance at what they heard. Even when Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he wouldn't listen.

Then the king commanded his son Jerahmeel, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah. But the Lord had hidden them.

After the king had burned Jeremiah's scroll, the Lord gave Jeremiah another message. He said, "Get another scroll, and write everything again just as you did on the scroll King Jehoiakim burned.

Then say to the king, 'this is what the Lord says: You burned the scroll because it said the king of Babylon would destroy this land and everything in it.

Now this is what the Lord says about King Jehoiakim of Judah: He will have no heirs to sit on the throne of David. His dead body will be thrown out to lie unburied—exposed to hot days and frosty nights.

I will punish him and his family and his officials because of their sins. I will pour out on them and on all the people of Judah and Jerusalem all the disasters I have promised, for they would not listen to my warnings.' "

Then Jeremiah took another scroll and dictated again to his secretary Baruch. He wrote everything that had been on the scroll King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. Only this time, he added much more!

A time of fasting (when people abstained from eating food to show their humility and repentance) was often called during times of national emergency. Babylon was destroying city after city and closing in on Jerusalem. As the people came to the temple, Baruch told them how to avert the coming tragedy. But they refused to listen.

God told Jeremiah to write his words on a scroll. Because he was not allowed to go to the temple, Jeremiah asked his scribe, Baruch, to whom he had dictated the scroll to read it to the people gathered there. Baruch then read it to the officials, and finally Jehudi read it to the king himself.

Although the king burned the scroll, he could not destroy the word of God. Today many people try to put God's Word aside or say that it contains errors and therefore cannot be trusted. People may reject God's Word, but they cannot destroy it. God's Word will stand forever (Psalm 119:89).a

Book of the prophecies of, delivered to Seraiah, with a charge from Jeremiah

Jeremiah 51:59-64

The prophet Jeremiah gave this message to Zedekiah's staff officer, Seraiah son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah. This was during the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign.

Jeremiah had recorded on a scroll all the terrible disasters that would soon come upon Babylon. He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, read aloud everything on this scroll.

Then say, 'Lord, you have said that you will destroy Babylon so that neither people nor animals will remain here. She will lie empty and abandoned forever.'

Then, when you have finished reading the scroll, tie it to a stone, and throw it into the Euphrates River. Then say, 'In this same way Babylon and her people will sink, never again to rise, because of the disasters I will bring upon her.' "

This is the end of Jeremiah's messages.

Zedekiah seeks counsel from God by

Jeremiah 21:1-3

The Lord spoke through Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, the priest, to speak with him. They begged Jeremiah,

"Please ask the Lord to help us. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has begun his attack on Judah. Perhaps the Lord will be gracious and do a mighty miracle as he has done in the past. Perhaps he will force Nebuchadnezzar to withdraw his armies."

Jeremiah 21-28 are Jeremiah's messages concerning Nebuchadnezzar's attacks on Jerusalem between 588 and 586 B.C. (see also 2 Kings 25). King Zedekiah decided to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:20), and the nobles advised allying with Egypt. Jeremiah pronounced judgment on the kings (Jeremiah 21:1-23:8) and false prophets (Jeremiah 23:9-40) for leading the people astray.

King Zedekiah probably was referring to God's deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in the days of Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-37). But Zedekiah's hopes were dashed. He was Judah's last ruler during the time of the exile of 586 B.C.

Pashhur came to the prophet for help. (This is not the same Pashhur as in Jeremiah 20:1.) God still had work for Jeremiah to do. In living out our faith, we may find that rejection, disappointment, or hard work has brought us to the point of despondency. But we are still needed. God has important work for us as well.

Jeremiah 37:3

Nevertheless, King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, to ask Jeremiah, "Please pray to the Lord our God for us."

King Zedekiah and his officials did not want to listen to Jeremiah's words, but they wanted the blessings of his prayers. They wanted a superficial religion that wouldn't cost anything. But God is not pleased with those who come to him only for what they can get rather than seeking to establish or deepen a relationship with him.

We would not accept that kind of relationship with someone else, and we shouldn't expect God to accept it from us.

Jeremiah 38:14

One day King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah to meet him at the third entrance of the Lord's Temple. "I want to ask you something," the king said. "And don't try to hide the truth."

His intercession asked by Johanan and all the people

Jeremiah 42:1-6

Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, approached

Jeremiah the prophet. They said, "Please pray to the Lord your God for us. As you know, we are only a tiny remnant compared to what we were before. Beg the Lord your God to show us what to do and where to go."

"All right," Jeremiah replied. "I will pray to the Lord your God, and I will tell you everything he says. I will hide nothing from you."

Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the Lord your God be a faithful witness against us if we refuse to obey whatever he tells us to do!

Whether we like it or not, we will obey the Lord our God to whom we send you with our plea. For if we obey him, everything will turn out well for us."

Johanan and his associates spoke their own curse; Jeremiah merely elaborated on it. It was a tragic mistake to ask for God's guidance with no intention of following it. Be sure never to ask God for something that you know in your heart you really do not want. It is better not to pray than to pray hypocritically. God cannot be deceived.

By Zedekiah

Jeremiah 37:3

Nevertheless, King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, to ask Jeremiah, "Please pray to the Lord our God for us."

King Zedekiah and his officials did not want to listen to Jeremiah's words, but they wanted the blessings of his prayers. They wanted a superficial religion that wouldn't cost anything. But God is not pleased with those who come to him only for what they can get rather than seeking to establish or deepen a relationship with him. We would not accept that kind of relationship with someone else, and we shouldn't expect God to accept it from us.

Johanah transports Jeremiah into Egypt

Jeremiah 43:1-7

When Jeremiah had finished giving this message from the Lord their God to all the people,

Azariah son of Hoshai and Johanah son of Kareah and all the other proud men said to Jeremiah, "You lie! The Lord our God hasn't forbidden us to go to Egypt! Baruch son of Neriah has convinced you to say this, so we will stay here and be killed by the Babylonians or be carried off into exile."

So Johanah and all the army officers and all the people refused to obey the Lord's command to stay in Judah. Johanah and his officers took with them all the people who had returned from the nearby countries to which they had fled.

In the crowd were men, women, and children, the king's daughters, and all those whom Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, had left with Gedaliah. Also included were the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch. The people refused to obey the Lord and went to Egypt, going as far as the city of Tahpanhes.

Johanah and his tiny band had come to Jeremiah for God's approval of their plan, not for God's direction. This is a recurring problem for most of us—seeking God's approval of our desires rather than asking him for guidance. It's not good to make plans unless we are willing to have God change them, and it is not good to pray unless we are willing to accept God's answer.

Afraid to obey the Lord, the people headed for Egypt, even forcing Jeremiah to go with them. (They thought that perhaps God would spare them if Jeremiah was with them.) Jeremiah had served as a prophet for 40 years.

Many of his words had already come true, and he had turned down an offer to live comfortably in Babylon, returning instead to his beloved people. But the people still rejected Jeremiah's advice. The response of our audience is not necessarily a measure of our success. Jeremiah was doing all God asked, but he had been called to minister to a very stubborn group of people.

Foretells the conquest of Egypt by Babylon

Jeremiah 43:8-12

Then at Tahpanhes, the Lord gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, "While the people of Judah are watching, bury large rocks between the pavement stones at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace here in Tahpanhes.

Then say to the people of Judah, 'The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will surely bring my servant Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, here to Egypt. I will set his throne on these stones that I have hidden. He will spread his royal canopy over them.

And when he comes, he will destroy the land of Egypt. He will bring death to those destined for death; he will bring captivity to those destined for captivity; he will bring the sword against those destined for the sword.

He will set fire to the temples of Egypt's gods, burning all their idols and carrying away the people as captives. He will pick clean the land of Egypt as a shepherd picks fleas from his cloak. And he himself will leave unharmed.

Prophecies of Jeremiah studied by Daniel

Daniel 9:2

During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, was studying the writings of the prophets. I learned from the word of the Lord, as recorded by Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years.

Daniel pleaded with God to bring about the promised return of his people to their land. The prophet Jeremiah had written that God would not allow the captives to return to their land for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; Jeremiah 29:10). Daniel knew of this prophecy and realized that this 70-year period was coming to an end.

Jeremiah purchases a field

Jeremiah 32:7-10

"Your cousin Hanamel son of Shallum will come and say to you, 'Buy my field at Anathoth. By law you have the right to buy it before it is offered to anyone else.' "

Then, just as the Lord had said he would, Hanamel came and visited me in the prison. He said, "Buy my field at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. By law you have the right to buy it before it is offered to anyone else, so buy it for yourself." Then I knew for sure that the message I had heard was from the Lord.

So I bought the field at Anathoth, paying Hanamel seventeen pieces of silver for it. I signed and sealed the deed of purchase before witnesses, weighed out the silver, and paid him.

God told Jeremiah to buy a field outside Jerusalem. The city had been under siege for a year, and Jeremiah bought land that the soldiers occupied—certainly a poor investment. In addition, Jeremiah was a prisoner in the palace. But Jeremiah was demonstrating his faith in God's promises to bring his people back and to rebuild Jerusalem.

Trust doesn't come easy. It wasn't easy for Jeremiah to publicly buy land already captured by the enemy. But he trusted God. It wasn't easy for David to believe that he would become king, even after he was anointed. But he trusted God (1 Samuel 16-31).

It wasn't easy for Moses to believe that he and his people would escape Egypt, even after God spoke to him from a burning bush. But he trusted God (Exodus 3:1-4:20). It isn't easy for us to believe that God can fulfill his "impossible" promises either, but we must trust him. God, who worked in the lives of Biblical heroes, will work in our lives too, if we will let him.

Lamentations of Jeremiah over Josiah

2 Chron. 35:25

The prophet Jeremiah composed funeral songs for Josiah, and to this day choirs still sing these sad songs about his death. These songs of sorrow have become a tradition and are recorded in The Book of Laments.

Over the prosperity of the wicked

Jeremiah 12:1-6

Lord, you always give me justice when I bring a case before you. Now let me bring you this complaint: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy? You have planted them, and they have taken root and prospered. Your name is on their lips, but in their hearts they give you no credit at all.

But as for me, Lord, you know my heart. You see me and test my thoughts. Drag these people away like helpless sheep to be butchered! Set them aside to be slaughtered!

How long must this land weep? Even the grass in the fields has withered. The wild animals and birds have disappeared because of the evil in the land. Yet the people say, "The Lord won't do anything!"

Then the Lord replied to me, "If racing against mere men makes you tired, how will you race against horses? If you stumble and fall on open ground, what will you do in the thickets near the Jordan?"

Even your own brothers, members of your own family, have turned on you. They have plotted, raising a cry against you. Do not trust them, no matter how pleasantly they speak.

Many people have asked, “Why does the way of the wicked prosper?” (See, for example, Job 21:4-21 and Habakkuk 1:1-4.) Jeremiah knew that God’s justice would ultimately come, but he was impatient because he wanted justice to come quickly. God didn’t give a doctrinal answer; instead he gave a challenge—if

Jeremiah couldn’t handle this, how would he handle the injustices ahead? It is natural for us to demand fair play and cry for justice against those who take advantage of others. But when we call for justice, we must realize that we ourselves would be in big trouble if God gave each of us what we truly deserve.

Life was extremely difficult for Jeremiah despite his love for and obedience to God. When he called to God for relief, God’s reply in effect was, “If you think this is bad, how are you going to cope when it gets really tough?”

Not all of God’s answers to prayer are nice or easy to handle. Any Christian who has experienced war, bereavement, or a serious illness knows this. But we are to be committed to God even when the going gets tough and when his answers to our prayers don’t bring immediate relief.

Over the desolation of God's heritage

Jeremiah 12:7-13

"I have abandoned my people, my special possession. I have surrendered my dearest ones to their enemies. My chosen people have roared at me like a lion of the forest, so I have treated them as though I hated them.

My chosen people have become as disgusting to me as a vulture. And indeed, they are surrounded by vultures. Bring on the wild beasts to pick their corpses clean!

"Many rulers have ravaged my vineyard, trampling down the vines and turning all its beauty into a barren wilderness. They have made it an empty wasteland; I hear its mournful cry. The whole land is desolate, and no one even cares.

Destroying armies plunder the land. The sword of the Lord kills people from one end of the nation to the other. No one will escape!

My people have planted wheat but are harvesting thorns. They have worked hard, but it has done them no good. They will harvest a crop of shame, for the fierce anger of the Lord is upon them."

This section concerns the broken covenant, and a rebuke for those who returned to idols after Josiah's reform. Jeremiah's rebuke prompted a threat against his life by his own countrymen. As Jeremiah suffered, he pondered the prosperity of the wicked. As he brought these words to a close, he used a ruined linen belt and filled wineskins as object lessons of God's coming judgment (see the note on +Jeremiah 13:1-11).

Jeremiah 40:6

So Jeremiah returned to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and lived in Judah with the few who were still left in the land.

Mizpah was a few miles north of Jerusalem. Not thoroughly destroyed by the Babylonians, Mizpah served as a refuge after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Prayers of

Jeremiah 14:7-9

The people say, "Lord, our wickedness has caught up with us. We have sinned against you. So please, help us for the sake of your own reputation. [8] O Hope of Israel, our Savior in times of trouble! Why are you like a stranger to us?

Why are you like someone passing through the land, stopping only for the night? [9] Are you also confused? Are you helpless to save us? You are right here among us, Lord. We are known as your people. Please don't abandon us now!"

Drought was a judgment with devastating consequences. As usual, when their backs were to the wall, the people cried out to God. But God rejected their plea because they did not repent; they merely wanted his rescue. Not even Jeremiah's prayers would help. Their only hope was to turn to God.

Jeremiah 32:17-25

"O Sovereign Lord! You have made the heavens and earth by your great power. Nothing is too hard for you!

You are loving and kind to thousands, though children suffer for their parents' sins.

You are the great and powerful God, the Lord Almighty.

You have all wisdom and do great and mighty miracles.

You are very aware of the conduct of all people, and you reward them according to their deeds.

You performed miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt—things still remembered to this day! And you have continued to do great miracles in Israel and all around the world. You have made your name very great, as it is today.

"You brought Israel out of Egypt with mighty signs and wonders, with great power and overwhelming terror.

You gave the people of Israel this land that you had promised their ancestors long before—a land flowing with milk and honey.

Our ancestors came and conquered it and lived in it, but they refused to obey you or follow your law. They have hardly done one thing you told them to! That is why you have sent this terrible disaster upon them.

"See how the siege ramps have been built against the city walls! Because of war, famine, and disease, the city has been handed over to the Babylonians, who will conquer it. Everything has happened just as you said it would.

And yet, O Sovereign Lord, you have told me to buy the field—paying good money for it before these witnesses—even though the city will soon belong to the Babylonians."

After Jeremiah bought the field, he began to wonder if such a move was wise. He sought relief in prayer from his nagging doubts. In this prayer, Jeremiah affirmed that God is Creator (Jeremiah 32:17), the wise Judge of all the ways of people (Jeremiah 32:19), and Redeemer (Jeremiah 32:21). God loves us and sees our

situation. Whenever we doubt God's wisdom or wonder if it is practical to obey him, we can review what we already know about him. Such thoughts and prayers will quiet our doubts and calm our fears.

Zeal of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words are what sustain me. They bring me great joy and are my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.

This section opens with God sending a drought on Judah and refusing to answer their prayers for rain. It continues with Jeremiah's description of judgment to come.

Lesson from life

It may be easy for us to identify with Jeremiah frustrations and discouragement, but we need to realize that this prophet's life is also an encouragement to faithfulness.

The majority opinion is not necessarily God's will. Although punishment for sin is severe, there is hope in God's mercy. God will not accept empty or insincere worship. Serving God does not guarantee earthly security

Key verses:

"Ah, Sovereign LORD, I said, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child. But the LORD said to me, do not say, I am only a child. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 1:6-8).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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