

Sermon, July 24, 2011
“Turn Back to God”, Jeremiah 29:10-14
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Books of Prophecy

- Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial, Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Overview of Jeremiah¹:

- Jeremiah, the author, served as both a priest and a prophet, and was the son of a priest named Hilkiyah.
- His name means “Jehovah establishes, appoints, or sends.”
- He was from the small village of Anathoth (1:1), today called Anata, about 3 mi. NE of Jerusalem.
- As an object lesson to Judah, Jeremiah remained unmarried (16:1–4).
- The scribe Baruch assisted Jeremiah in ministry, to whom Jeremiah dictated and who copied and had custody over the writings compiled from the prophet’s messages (36:4,32; 45:1).
- Jeremiah has been known as “the weeping prophet” (cf. 9:1; 13:17; 14:17), because of his predictions of judgment by the invading Babylonians. He was threatened, tried for his life, put in stocks, forced to flee from Jehoiakim, publicly humiliated by a false prophet, thrown into a pit.
- Jeremiah’s ministry was directed mostly to Judah, but which expanded to other nations at times. He appealed to his countrymen to repent and avoid God’s judgment via an invader (chaps. 7,26).
- The dates of his ministry, which spanned 5 decades, are from the Judean king Josiah’s 13th year, noted in 1:2 (627 B.C.), to beyond the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 B.C. (Jer. 39,40,52). After 586 B.C., Jeremiah was forced to go with a fleeing remnant of Judah to Egypt (Jer. 43,44).
- The nation’s independence was at an end and Jeremiah would witness the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple.
- **Overall Outline of Jeremiah² :**
 - I. Preparation of Jeremiah (1:1–19)
 - II. Proclamations to Judah (2:1–45:5)
 - A. Condemnation of Judah (2:1–29:32)
 - B. Consolation to Judah—New Covenant (30:1–33:26)
 - C. Calamity on Judah (34:1–45:5)
 - III. Proclamations of Judgment on the Nations (46:1–51:64)
 - IV. The Fall of Jerusalem (52:1–34)
 - A. The Destruction of Jerusalem (52:1–23)
 - B. The Deportation of Jews (52:24–30)
 - C. The Deliverance of Jehoiachin (52:31–34)

Major Themes of Isaiah:

- God’s plan for Jeremiah’s life, both in his proclamation of God’s message and in his commitment to fulfill all of His will (1:5–19; 15:19–21).
- God’s longing for Israel to be tender toward Him, as in the days of first love (2:1–3);
- Jeremiah’s servant tears, as “the weeping prophet” (9:1; 14:17);
- The close, intimate relationship God had with Israel and that He yearned to keep (13:11);
- Suffering, as in Jeremiah’s trials (11:18–23; 20:1–18), God’s sufficiency in all trouble (20:11-13)
- The vital role that God’s Word can play in life (15:16); 6) the place of faith in expecting restoration from the God for whom nothing is too difficult (chap. 32, especially vv. 17,27); and
- Prayer for the coordination of God’s will with God’s action in restoring Israel (33:3,6–18).
- The main theme of Jeremiah is judgment upon Judah (chaps. 1–29) with restoration in the future messianic kingdom (23:3–8; 30–33).
- God’s willingness to spare and bless the nation only if the people repent.

¹ MacArthur, John, MacArthur Study Bible.

²MacArthur, John Jr: *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed. Nashville : Word Pub., 1997, c1997, S. Je 1:1

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In Isaiah we read about the promise of a Savior and the future glory of Israel. In Jeremiah we are once again warned about our disobedience to God and encouraged to pursue a relationship with the Creator who loves us and is concerned for our best.

1. Jeremiah warns of coming judgment of Israel for their disobedience and unrepentant heart.

Jeremiah 29:10 ¹⁰ *For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.*

- There is a price to pay when you are disobedient.
- You discipline children, why?... to judge/denounce disobedience, to make them better
- But always because you love them.
- You want them to see the error of their ways and know you want the best for them

2. As a loving Father, God is always guiding you toward the best life He has planned for you

Jeremiah 29:11 ¹¹ *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

- Jeremiah is calling on God's people to have faith in their Lord.
- In the workplace a healthy faith in your boss is important.
- A critical boss who cannot be trusted is not good.
- But, if they critical of your work in a constructive way and have your best in mind then they have demonstrated integrity in their word and earn your trust.
- God is true to His word and can always be trusted because of His love toward you.

3. God desires a love relationship with His people and wants us to desire Him in the same way

Jeremiah 29:12-13 ¹² *Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.* ¹³ *When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart,*

- The Father wanted Israel to desire a genuine love relationship with their Creator.
- But He left it up to them to call, come, pray, search, seek...with all their heart
- He desperately wants you to turn back to Him in the same genuine relationship.
- Can you imagine a love relationship where one never called, never came to have a talk, never searched the other out, to seek them...heart is not in it...there is no genuine love.
- God always fulfills His half; He calls, comes, speaks, searches, and seeks you
- He wants you to do the same out of love.

4. God promises that if you do, you WILL find Him, and you WILL be restored!

Jeremiah 29:14 ¹⁴ *I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.*

- When you pursue God with all your heart you will be restored to Him.
- You will once again walk the path He has made especially for you and your fortunes will be restored...not material fortunes, but the treasure of a restored relationship with God.
- You will be gathered from worldly things and brought back to the presence of God.

Conclusion:

- Disobedience cannot be expected to go unpunished. As a loving parent would not allow their children to run wild, so God will discipline your disobedience.
- But as a loving parent can be trusted to always have the best in mind for their children so you can trust God who wants your welfare with a future and hope.
- All you need to do is repent of your disobedience, say you are sorry, mean it and want to change...and you will find God and be restored by His grace and mercy.
- The great treasure of being restored back into a loving relationship with your God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the greatest fortune; one that is brought out of the muck and mire of the world and into the family of the King.
- The message of Jeremiah.