

Survey of the Bible **Jeremiah 1 -28**

As we come to the book of Jeremiah we will see that Jeremiah essentially takes up the mantle of Isaiah as he continues to warn the Israelites of Judah of her impending judgment from God because of their rebellion against their Creator and Savior.

Isaiah prophesied during the time in which the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians in the early 720's BC. His ministry and presumably his death took place around 680 BC.

Though his message from God to them was clearly judgmental in nature the very end of his prophecy looked to the day when a new covenant would replace the old covenant and its ultimate fulfillment would be found in the consummation of redemptive history as seen in the new heavens and new earth.

Isaiah 66:22-24 ²² "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. ²³ "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD. ²⁴ "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

Here we see, not only the glory of the kingdom of God on earth being spoken of in the new heavens and new earth, but also the eternal condemnation of all who transgressed against the Lord.

The reference to verse 24, "For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind", is a reference to the judgment that Jesus Himself refers to as He quotes this very passage.

Mark 9:43-44 ⁴³ "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, ⁴⁴ *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.*

This is a reference to the final judgment of rebellious men found in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

And so, Isaiah has in mind this same judgment for those rebels in Israel who would transgress the commandments of God and whore after other gods. But the hope that he lays out is one that allows only those who embrace this new covenant, what Isaiah calls an everlasting covenant.

Isaiah 61:8 ⁸ For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense And make an everlasting covenant with them.

By the way, why would God make an everlasting covenant with them if the present covenant with them was sufficient?

Who are the one's with whom God makes an everlasting covenant in the context of Isaiah, particularly Isaiah 55:1-3?

Isaiah 55:1-3 ^{NAU} "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. ² "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. ³ "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *According to* the faithful mercies shown to David.

So, again, who is Isaiah addressing in this immediate context?

Israel. And yet we know that Israel, the nation, is judged and deemed unworthy by God Himself all throughout the book of Isaiah and yet the hope of returning to the land is held out to them by God. But we know that it is only a small portion of these who will return.

Isaiah 10:20-22 ²⁰ Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹ A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. ²² For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, *Only* a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.

In this we see that an entire nation is not in view, but only a chosen few and thus is a picture of those chosen that Jesus speaks of when describing the kingdom of God.

Matthew 22:2-15 ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ "Again he sent out other slaves saying, "Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are *all* butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'" ⁵ "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. ⁸ "Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there*, invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ "Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. ¹¹ "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. ¹³ "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ "***For many are called, but few are chosen.***" ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said.

What is Jesus saying about those who were allowed to stay at the wedding feast as it pertains to their dress?

Unless they are clothed in wedding attire they are thrown into the outer darkness.

What wedding clothes is Jesus referring to?

The same clothes that the prophet Zechariah spoke of.

^{NAU} **Zechariah 3:4** He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes."

These are the same robes our Lord spoke on when addressing John on the isle of Patmos as he delivered the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:5-6 ⁵ 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. ⁶ 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

^{NAU} **Revelation 2:7** 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

Who is the one who overcomes?

1 John 5:4-5 ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith. ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The point is that Isaiah was not addressing national Israel, but the remnant of Israel who believed, so as to be the only one's who would enjoy the blessings of the everlasting covenant with its full expression in the new heavens and new earth.

And Jeremiah will expand on this same message of God's judgment on the nations of Israel and Judah along with the blessings of a future covenant from God.

We begin with God commissioning Jeremiah to speak to Judah.

Jeremiah 1:4-10 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 have appointed you a prophet to the nations." ⁶ Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." ⁷ But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall

8 "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD stretched 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 appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant."

You'll notice here that Jeremiah is reluctant to embrace this task from God because he feels inadequate for the job.

But what is God's response?

You will do what I tell you to do. But the Lord adds, but don't be afraid because I am with you to deliver you.

How many times in our own lives have we felt inadequate to serve God in a particular capacity? But His message to us is the same. Don't be afraid because I am with you to deliver you.

In the first 10 chapters of Jeremiah he rebukes the nation of Israel and promises them condemnation and judgment as He plans to bring in other nations to destroy Judah.

Jeremiah 1:13-19 13 The word of the LORD came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." 14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. 15 "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the LORD; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah. 16 "I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. 17 "Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them. 18 "Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. 19 "They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.

So, God promises to judge Judah and the means by which He will do it will be the nations from the north. This would turn out to be Babylon.

By the way, why do the nations from the north decide to invade and capture Judah according to our text?

Because God calls them to do it. And they did it starting around the year 609 BC and finally accomplished the conquest in 597 BC.

2 Kings 25:1-7 ^{NAU} Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. ² So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ³ On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁴ Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war *fled* by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. ⁵ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him. ⁶ Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him. ⁷ They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.

Does this mean that the Babylonians had the choice of not destroying Judah?

No, in the sense that God had already chosen that nation to be the instrument of judgement on Judah. And for that reason there was no other nation that could or would accomplish His will.

But that doesn't sound fair as we know that Babylon would be judged by God for their actions.

Jeremiah 50:18-19 ¹⁸ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I am going to punish the king of Babylon and his land, just as I punished the king of Assyria. ¹⁹ 'And I will bring Israel back to his pasture and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.

If they had no choice in the matter how could they be held guilty before God?

But we could say the same about Pharaoh in Egypt when he would not allow the Jews to go out into the desert to worship the Lord and was finally destroyed by the Lord.

And we're told that God had actually chosen Pharaoh for that very purpose.

Romans 9:15-24 ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." ¹⁶ So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." ¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? ²² What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

And so, God is the one who molds vessels for His own purposes and some of those purposes, as we see in Jeremiah, is to raise up a nation to destroy the nation of Judah. The reason that both Babylon and the Pharaoh would be judged is because it was in their hearts all along to accomplish what God had willed for them. He simply hardened their hearts further as He chose them for the task.

The next 17 chapters, chapters 11-28, the Lord makes it clear that nothing at this point will reverse His righteous anger with Judah.

Jeremiah 12:7-11 ⁷ "I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul Into the hand of her enemies. ⁸ "My inheritance has become to Me Like a lion in the forest; She has roared against Me; Therefore I have come to hate her. ⁹ "Is My inheritance like a speckled bird of prey to Me? Are the birds of prey against her on every side? Go,

gather all the beasts of the field, Bring them to devour! ¹⁰ "Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard, They have trampled down My field; They have made My pleasant field A desolate wilderness. ¹¹ "It has been made a desolation, Desolate, it mourns before Me; The whole land has been made desolate, Because no man lays it to heart.

Jeremiah 12:14-17 ¹⁴ Thus says the LORD concerning all My wicked neighbors who strike at the inheritance with which I have endowed My people Israel, "Behold I am about to uproot them from their land and will uproot the house of Judah from among them. ¹⁵ "And it will come about that after I have uprooted them, I will again have compassion on them; and I will bring them back, each one to his inheritance and each one to his land. ¹⁶ "Then if they will really learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' even as they taught My people to swear by Baal, they will be built up in the midst of My people. ¹⁷ "But if they will not listen, then I will uproot that nation, uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD.

Notice that God will uproot them and it is only after they have been uprooted that He will then have compassion on them and will bring them back to the land. But bringing them back to the land and establishing them in the land is conditional.

Upon what condition will they be allowed back according to verse 16?

Jeremiah 12:16-17 ... if they will really learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' even as they taught My people to swear by Baal, they will be built up in the midst of My people. ¹⁷ "But if they will not listen, then I will uproot that nation, uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD.

God's compassion was seen when He used Ezra the priest to take back a remnant to the land to reestablish the house of God. And interestingly enough, just as God prompted King Nebuchadnezzar to take Judah captive, it would be God again who would prompt the heart of another king to allow them to go back.

Ezra 1:1-5 ^{NAU} Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying: ² "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and

He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ 'Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴ 'Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'" ⁵ Then the heads of fathers' *households* of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites arose, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.

God is sovereign in the affairs of all men in all ages. His will will always be accomplished according to His eternal plans. And you and I fall within that plan.

By the way, according to verse 5, who are those who returned to the land?

... even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.

This is the remnant that God chooses and allows to re-enter the land.

Jeremiah 50:19-20 ¹⁹ 'And I will bring Israel back to his pasture and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead. ²⁰ 'In those days and at that time,' declares the LORD, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.'

Next time we'll take a look at this remnant as Jeremiah lays out the hope for them in chapters 29-38.