

The Book of Jeremiah

Introduction

This book starts with information concerning the person of Jeremiah, the time when he was called to the office of a prophet, and the period of time during which he exercised his ministry.

Jeremiah means "exalted of the Lord," or, "established by the Lord." He was the son of Hilkiah. Some have identified the father of Jeremiah with the high-priest Hilkiah, who was such a power in Josiah's great reformation work. This is incorrect. The high-priest Hilkiah was of the line of Eleazar, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 6:4, 13. The father of the prophet Jeremiah was, we read in the first verse of this book, of the priests that were in Anathoth; the priests who lived there were of the line of Ithamar. (See 1 Kings 2:26; 1 Chronicles 24:3, 6.) Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, was in Benjamin, about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The first time the Word of the Lord came to young Jeremiah, for he was but a child, was in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, or just a year after the eventful reformation accomplished by that good man. We know but little of the activity of the prophet during the subsequent reign of Josiah. Only one message is timed "in the day of Josiah the king" (3:6). In the history of that illustrious king of Judah, we read nothing of Jeremiah, with the exception of the brief statement "and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah" (2 Chron. 35:25). It seems that the third verse gives the period covering the larger part of the ministry of this prophet. The Word of the Lord came unto him "also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."

The book which bears this prophet's name abounds in personal allusions. In fact no other prophet in his character, in the exercise of his soul, and in his experience is so fully portrayed as Jeremiah; not even Ezekiel and Daniel whom, with Habakkuk and Zephaniah, were his contemporaries. The study of this great man of God is deeply interesting.

He has been called "the weeping prophet" and is generally known by that name. No other prophet wept like Jeremiah. That outburst in his lamentations, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water" (Lam. 1:16) shows how tender hearted he was, and how his tears flowed freely. But he was something else beside the weeping prophet. He was a man of great courage, with the boldness of a lion. In the presence of His Lord he was prostrate and broken, one who trembled at His Word, filled with godly fear. He was a man of prayer and faith in the Lord and faithful in the discharge of his great commission.

His Life of Service and Suffering

His lot was one of great solitude; he was divinely commanded to remain unmarried (16:2). He was forbidden to enter the house of joy and feasting (16:8). Reproach and derision were his daily portion (20:8). He was betrayed by his own kindred (12:6), and his fellow citizens at Anathoth wanted to kill him (11:21). Then, in the first part of his book, we read of the inner struggles he had, the spiritual conflict, when everybody was against him. In the bitterness of his spirit he spoke of himself as "a man of contention to the whole earth" (15:10). He even doubted whether his whole work was not a delusion and a lie (20:7), and like Job he cursed the day of his birth (20:14). When the Chaldeans came to the front and Jeremiah heard from the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar was called as His servant to receive the dominion from His hands (27:6), Jeremiah urged submission. This stamped him as a traitor. False prophets appeared who contradicted him with their false messages; he committed his cause to the Lord. On one occasion when the temple courts were filled with thousands of worshippers, he appeared and uttered the message that Jerusalem would be a curse, that the temple should share the fate of the tabernacle at Shiloh (26:6). Then the great conflict began. The priests, the false prophets and the people demanded his death (26:8). The Lord

graciously protected him through chosen instruments. Still greater were his sufferings under Zedekiah. His struggles with the false prophets continued; they called him a madman (29:26), and urged his imprisonment. He then appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with bonds and yokes upon his neck (27:2), showing the coming fate of Judah. A false prophet broke the offensive symbol and gave a lying message that the Chaldeans should be destroyed within two years. Then the Egyptian army approached, and the Chaldeans hastened away; it created a dangerous condition for Jeremiah. He sought to escape to his home town Anathoth; it was discovered, and he was charged with falling to the Chaldeans as others did (37:14). In spite of his denial, he was thrown into a dungeon. Later he was thrown into the prison pit by the princes to die there. From that horrible fate he was again mercifully delivered. When the city fell, Nebuchadnezzar protected his person (39:11), and after being carried away with other captives as far as Ramah, he set him free. It was left to him whether he would go to Babylon to live under the special protection of the king, or remain in the land with the governor Gedaliah. He chose the latter. But Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael and his associates. Then the people forced him to emigrate with them to Egypt. The last glimpse of the prophet's life we have of him is in Tahpanhes, uttering there a final protest and a great message. Nothing is known of the details of his death.

"He is preeminently the man that hath seen afflictions (Lam. 3:1). He witnessed the departure one by one, of all his hopes of national reformation and deliverance. He is forced to appear as a prophet of evil, dashing to the ground the false hopes with which the people were deluded. Other prophets, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, had been sent to arouse the people to resistance. He has been brought to the conclusion, bitter as it is, that the only safety for his people lies in their acceptance of that which they think is the worst evil, that brings on him the charge of treachery. If it were not for his trust in the God of Israel, for his hope of a better future to be brought out of all this chaos and darkness, his heart would fail within him. But that vision is clear and bright, and it gives to him, almost as fully as to Isaiah, the character of a prophet of glory. He is not merely an Israelite looking forward to a national restoration. In the midst of all the woes he utters against the nearby nations, he has hopes and promises for them also. In that stormy sunset of prophecy, he beholds, in spirit, the dawn of a brighter day. He sees that, if there is any hope of salvation for his people, it cannot be by a return to the old system and the old ordinances, divine though they had once been. There must be a New Covenant. That word, destined to be so full of power for after ages, appears first in his prophecies. The relations between the people and the Lord of Israel, between mankind and God, must rest, not on an outward law, with its requirements of obedience, but on an inward fellowship with Him and the consciousness of entire dependence. For all this the prophet saw clearly there must be a personal center. The kingdom of God could not be manifested but through a perfect righteous man, ruling over men on earth. They gather round the person of Christ, the Jehovah Zdidkenu--THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, the Son of David, Israel's coming king."

The Authorship of Jeremiah

The book begins with "The words of Jeremiah," and it closes with chapter 51:64 with the statement, "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The final chapter is an addition of a historical character. That Jeremiah must be the author of the greater part of the book is proven by the many personal references which only the prophet himself could have written. No other prophet was so frequently commanded to write as Jeremiah was. "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (30:2). "Take thee the roll of a book and write therein all the words that I have spoken" (36:2). Then Baruch witnessed that he wrote all these words which came from Jeremiah's lips in a book (36:18); and when the roll was burned the Lord said, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll" (36:28). "So Jeremiah wrote in a book" (51:60). Who are the men who try to make us believe that Jeremiah did not write these words? Baruch, his secretary, who took the dictations from the lips of the prophet (36:27) may have arranged, under the direction of Jeremiah, the different prophecies. The language used is the language of his time and is tinged with Aramaic. The style does not compare with that of Isaiah.

There are, of course, many difficulties in connection with the text. For instance, the Greek

version (the Septuagint) differs more widely from the Hebrew than that of any other portion of the Old Testament. Numerous passages like 7:1-2, 17:1-4, 23:14-26, etc., are omitted in the Greek version. Inasmuch as the Hebrew is the oldest and the Septuagint was made from the Hebrew, the latter is the correct text. The critical school has made much out of these apparent difficulties and the disorder and unchronological character of the book. Therefore Jeremiah has suffered just as much in the dissecting room of the destructive critics as Isaiah and Moses. Thus Peake in his commentary on Jeremiah uses nine symbolic letters to show which is which.

J. Which stands for the prophecies of which Jeremiah is most likely the author. S. This stands for certain supplementers. JS. This stands for the words of Jeremiah worked over by a supplementer; nobody knows who he was. B. This means Baruch and his production. BS. This means that Baruch's words were supplemented by some more unknown supplementers. R. This stands for Redactor, whoever he was. I. Here we have an unknown author who, according to the critics, wrote chapter 10:1-6. K. Here is another unknown gentleman, the author of 17:19, etc. E. This letter denotes extracts from 2 Kings.

It is of little interest to quote the ramblings of Duhm, Ryssell, Hitzig, Renan and others about the authorship and compilation of Jeremiah. Not one of these scholars agrees. They have theories but no certainties. How simple it is to believe the beginning and the end of this book, that here are "the words of Jeremiah. And though King Jehoiakim tried to destroy these words, they still live and they will live on in our days, in spite of the successors of the wicked king, the professors of apostasy, who are trying to give Christendom an abridged Bible.

That the book appears disjointed and is unchronological is no argument against its authenticity. The Companion Bible gives the following: "The prophecies of Jeremiah do not profess to be given in chronological order; nor is there any reason why they should be so given. Why, we ask, should modern critics first assume that they ought to be, and then condemn them because they are not? It is the historical portions, which concern Jehoiakim and Zedekiah that are chiefly so affected; and who was Jehoiakim that his history should be of any importance? Was it not he who cut up the Word of the Lord with a penknife and cast it into the fire? Why should not his history be cut up? Zedekiah rejected the same Word of Jehovah. Why should his history be respected?"

The Message of Jeremiah

His message is first a message which charges the people with having forsaken Jehovah. The sins of the people are uncovered, especially the sins of false worship and idolatry. Connected with this are the appeals to return unto the Lord with the promises of the mercy of Jehovah. The impenitent condition of the people is foreseen and judgment is announced. Then follow the messages which make known Jehovah's determination to punish Jerusalem, and further announcement of the impending judgment. But while Jeremiah gave the messages of warning of the coming disaster of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, he also received prophecies concerning the future. Thus in chapter 23 we find a great prophecy of restoration. He speaks of the days when the righteous Branch, the King, is to reign, when Judah will be saved and Israel dwell safely. Who that King is, every believer knows. His name is "Jehovah our Righteousness." It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Greater still is the great prophecy contained in chapters 30-31. Here we find the prophecy of the new covenant to be made with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Chapter 33 contains another prophetic restoration message. Chapters 46-51 contain prophecies against Gentile nations.

The personal experience and the sufferings of this prophet are of a typical character, like the experiences and sufferings of other men of God in the Old Testament. The following passages make Jeremiah a type of Christ: Chapter 11:19, 13:17, 20:7 (last sentence), 20:10, 26:11, 15; Lamentations 1:12, 3:14.

The Divisions of Jeremiah

We have already referred in the introduction to the charge made by the critics that the book of

Jeremiah is unchronological and lacks proper arrangement. Says one critic, "as the book now stands, there is nothing but the wildest confusion, a preposterous jumbling together of prophecies of different dates." Attempts have therefore been made to reconstruct the book on a chronological basis, but none of these are satisfactory. On the other hand, some able scholars have come to the conclusion that we possess the book substantially in the same state as that in which it left the hands of the prophet and his secretary Baruch. We believe this is correct. If Jeremiah was guided by the Spirit of God in writing and dictating his great messages, he wrote them down just as the Spirit wanted to have them written down. If some things appear disjointed, or out of the chronological order, there must be some wise purpose in it. We shall discover this as we proceed with the analysis and in our annotations.

To enjoy fully the book of Jeremiah a good knowledge of the historical setting is eminently necessary. We have given many references in the annotations which will help in this direction.

We call attention first to the two main divisions of the book. The first constitutes the greater part of the book, from chapters 1-45. This portion has the full ministry of the prophet during the reign of Josiah, the brief reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum; see chapter 22:10-12); the reign of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin (Coniah) and the reign of Zedekiah. The second division contains the prophecies against Gentile nations, that is chapters 46-51. The last chapter is an appendix corresponding in its history to 2 Kings. Some have looked upon this appendix as the introduction to the Lamentations.

The prophecies historically according to the reign of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah may be arranged as follows:

Under the Reign of Josiah. The call of Jeremiah and probably the greater part of chapters 1-6.

Under the Reign of Jehoahaz. The prophecy contained in chapter 22:10-12.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim. Chapters 7-20, 25-26, 35-36, 46:1-12, 47, 49.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim (Coniah, Jeconiah). Chapters 22 and 23.

Under the Reign of Zedekiah. Chapters 21, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30-34, 37-44, 46:13-28, 50 and 51.

We make the following divisions for the study of this book:

I. THE PROPHET'S CALL TO REPENTANCE, THE NATION'S IMPENITENCE, AND THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED (1-13)

II. THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH, HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS SUFFERING (14-39)

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (40-45)

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS (46-51)

V. THE HISTORICAL APPENDIX (52:1-34)

The different subdivisions will appear in the analysis.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE CALL To REPENTANCE, THE IMPENITENCE OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

CHAPTER 1 The Call of the Prophet

1. The introduction (1:1-3)

2. The divine call (1:4-10)

3. The renewed call and the first visions (1:11-19)

Verses 1-3. The first three verses introduce us to the person of the prophet, to the time the Word of the Lord came unto him, and to the sphere of his ministry. Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah, was a priest of the line of Ithamar; his home was Anathoth of Benjamin. (See general introduction.)

Verses 4-10. "Then the Word of the LORD came unto me" (verse 4). The prophet is the writer who tells us how he was called into the office of a prophet. A sovereign, omniscient and omnipotent Lord speaks to and informs the young Jeremiah that He knew him, that his call was prenatal. He had been chosen and set apart for the specific work which he now was to undertake. (See Isa. 49:1; Gal. 1:15, 16). What comfort this assuring knowledge must have been to the prophet in his trying ministry, in the persecutions which were his portion and the suffering he passed through! The Lord had called him, the Lord knew all that would take place, and He had the power to sustain him. And he is the same Lord today, and Jeremiah's comfort is still the comfort of His trusting people.

Jeremiah expresses at once his fear. Like Moses (Exodus 4:10), he manifests self-distrust. He was but a child, not in the sense of a mere child, but a youth. The Septuagint translates it, "I am too young." After that the Lord encouraged him by the promise of His presence, "I am with thee to deliver thee." Then He touched his mouth and said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." He was the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Who commissioned him to fulfill a ministry over nations and kingdoms, to announce the overthrow of them by the judgments of the Lord.

Verses 11-19. Some think that this renewed call came in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. There is nothing in the text to indicate this. The first vision is that of the rod of the almond tree. The Hebrew word for almond is "Shakad," which means to watch, to wake early. It is the first tree which shows the return of spring. It denotes the early fulfillment of the judgment purposes of the Lord. The vision of the seething pot toward the north denotes the coming invasion by the kingdom of the north, that is, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Then follows the renewed commission with a threat in case of disobedience; if his fearfulness would lead him to abandon the commission. More than that, the Lord, knowing the fears of the servant He had called and separated, encouraged him and once more promised him, "I am with thee saith the LORD, to deliver thee."

CHAPTERS 2:1-3:5 Expostulation and Impeachment

1. His love and kindness to Jerusalem (2:1-3)

2. The unfaithful people (2:4-11)

3. The two evils and the results (2:12-18)

4. Impeachment (2:19-30)

5. Expostulation (2:31-37)

6. Jehovah waiting to show mercy (3:1-5)

Verses 1-3. The first message Jeremiah received begins with reminding Jerusalem of the kindness Jehovah bestowed upon the nation in her youth, and how she went after Him in the wilderness. He had separated Israel to belong to Him, to be a holy nation, the first fruits of His increase, which probably means that other nations should through Israel be called to know Him. He was their protector and those who tried to devour them would be held guilty.

Verses 4-11. After Jehovah had called to the remembrance of the people the days of her youth, He reproves them for their unfaithfulness. This is the opening chapter of the roll which Jehudi read in the presence of Jehoiakim, which he threw into the fire after he had mutilated it with his penknife (chapter 36:23). The remonstrance starts with a pathetic question: "What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Was there anything unrighteous in Him: had He dealt in a treacherous way? Was the fault in Jehovah that they had left Him? They had not thought on His faithfulness as He had led them out of Egypt, through the desert and the shadows of death. It was forgotten by them, and when Jehovah brought them to the land of promise they had defiled the land. Priests, pastors and prophets had apostatized. Thus Jehovah states His case to plead with them and their children. Their folly and ingratitude were worse than that of heathen nations. Such was the failure of the favored nation. The failure of Christendom is even greater when we think of the greater manifestation of God's love in the gift of His Son, and the greater blessing and deliverance.

Verses 12-18. The two evils are, forsaking Jehovah, the fountain of living waters, and the hewing for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jehovah was the storehouse of the living waters, put at the disposal of His people without money and without price. But instead of confessing, "All my springs are in Thee," they had left Him, the source of life and comfort; and turned to broken cisterns of their own invention, as well as to the idols and worshipped them. It is so among the professing people of God in this dispensation; the two evils are present with us also. The result for Israel was enslavement. The young lions came (the Assyrian invasion) and made the land waste. Noph (Memphis) and Tahpanhes (Daphnae), that is, Egypt, did the same. It came as the fruit of having forsaken the fountain of living water.

Verses 19-30. The impeachment begins with the solemn statement: "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah Thy God, and that my fear is not in Thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." They had broken the covenant and played the harlot. The noble vine He had planted had degenerated. Their iniquity was marked before the Lord, and nothing that they did could remove the stain (verse 22). Yet they denied their guilt of going after idols. And when the Lord tells them, "withhold thy foot from being unshod," that is, running so much after strange gods, so that the feet become unshod, by wearing out the sandals, they boldly declared, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Their backs and their faces were turned from Jehovah. But when the time of trouble comes, they will say, "Arise, save us." But could or would the false gods they had made respond and save them? Some day a remnant of that nation will turn to the Lord and cry, "Arise, save us," and He will answer.

Verses 31-37. Israel's conduct was incomprehensible. Once more it is the "Why" of Jehovah. What had He done that they should turn away from Him? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet His people had forgotten Him, who had loved and adorned them, days without number. He will plead with them because they said, I have not sinned.

Chapter 3:1-5. Here is the first time the gracious invitation is given, "Return again to Me, saith the LORD." And how many times after, the Lord pleads in the riches of His mercy for His people to return unto Him and offers them forgiveness.

The Call to Repentance and judgment Announced (3:6-6:30)

CHAPTER 3

1. The contrast between backslidden Israel and treacherous Judah (3:6-11)
2. The call to return and the promised glory (3:12-18)
3. The future true repentance predicted and anticipated (3:19-25)

Verses 6-11. The message which begins with the sixth verse was given to Jeremiah during the reign of Josiah. There is then, first of all, a contrast between Israel (the ten tribes) and her sister Judah. (Compare with Ezekiel 23.) The house of Israel, the northern kingdom was judged first by the Lord. She played the harlot; after she had done so, the Lord said, "Turn thou to Me." She refused, and her treacherous sister the house of Judah saw it. And when the Lord dealt with the house of Israel in judgment and they were carried away, Judah did not fear but played the harlot. The tenth verse proves conclusively that the reformation under Josiah was not a true spiritual revival: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD."

Verses 12-18. Here is a message to be proclaimed toward the north, calling on backsliding Israel to return. He promises mercy to them. One hundred years before, the house of Israel had gone northward as captives. The Lord knew where they dwelt and sent them this message of mercy. He knows today where the house of Israel is, the ten tribes, and at some future time the gracious offer given here will be consummated in their return. These verses are prophetic. They speak of the time when the chosen people will return. Then Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the LORD." Israel will be converted. All the nations will be gathered unto the Name of Jehovah; the house of Judah with the house of Israel will be reunited. That will be when the King our ever blessed Lord comes back.

Verses 19-25. What the future true repentance of the people will be is here predicted and anticipated. There will be weeping and supplications. They will acknowledge that true salvation is in the Lord. They will confess their sins and their disobedience.

CHAPTER 4

1. True repentance and what it means (4:1-4)
2. The alarm sounded: judgment comes (4:5-13)
3. The doom of the rebellious people (4:14-22)
4. The desolation of Israel's land through judgment (4:23-31)

Verses 1-4. A return must be a return unto Him, Jehovah; anything less is insufficient. Their abominations must be judged and put away. Every return of backsliders must be in the same way-- a true return to the Lord with confession of sin, self-judgment, and abandonment of evil. The circumcision of the heart means regeneration. (See chapter 31:31-34, and Ezek. 36:26.)

Verses 5-13. This is the first definite announcement of the coming judgment from the north, which Jeremiah had seen in the vision of the boiling pot toward the north (chapter 1). The lion who comes, the destroyer of the Gentiles, who makes the land desolate, is Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. It is a very vivid description of the approaching judgment. Verse 10 means not that Jeremiah is reproaching the Lord for having deceived the people. Jeremiah did not preach peace, but the false prophets did. They came and spoke in the name of Jehovah, that there should be peace; and Jehovah permitted as a judgment these prophets, and the message of these prophets. And thus they were deceived.

Verses 14-22. The doom of Jerusalem and Judah is sealed; there can be no escape. Their ways and their doings brought all upon them. And when Jeremiah hears it from the lips of the Lord, he breaks out in a lament: "My bowels, My bowels! I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Verses 23-31. Then the prophet has a vision of what will happen to the land of Israel, when the

judgment threatened above has passed over it. The unscriptural invention and wicked teachings of Seventh Day Adventism applies this passage to the whole earth and teaches that when the Lord comes the whole earth will be laid waste. Like Isaiah 24, only Israel's land is in view. It must be not overlooked that the Lord said: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." This is Israel's hope.

CHAPTER 5

1. The apostate conditions of Jerusalem (5:1-9)
2. The impending judgment (5:10-18)
3. Sowing and reaping (5:19-29)
4. The horrible thing (5:30-31)

Verses 1-9. So degenerate had the inhabitants of Jerusalem become that the Lord promised if but one man could be found in the city who executed judgment and sought the truth, He would pardon Jerusalem. It was a general apostasy. A similar apostasy is predicted for the end of our age. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth?" "They were foolish, saith the Lord; they broke the yoke and burst the bonds; they have refused to return. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit these things, saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Verses 10-18. The judgment messages had not been believed by the people (verse 12). What the invader from the north will do to Israel is described in verses 15-18. Again the promise is given, "I will not make a full end with you." The Lord keeps in the midst of His people a remnant.

Verses 19-29. Their sowing was bringing a harvest. They asked, "Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us?" He answers them that they had sown their evil seed in forsaking the Lord and serving strange gods; the harvest would be serving strangers in a strange land. The good things promised had been turned away by their sins and iniquities. The question of verse 9 is repeated in verse 29. And what was true of that generation, is true of this present age also. The seed which is being sown is Bible rejection; the rejection of the gospel of Christ, the seed of apostasy, will bring a harvest of judgment as it did with Israel.

Verses 30-31. False prophets, false priests and the people were satisfied with it. How is it going to be in the end? Both prophets and priests were in league against the prophet of God. They misled the people; they were a curse instead of a blessing. It is not unlike the religious conditions in Christendom today.

CHAPTER 6

1. The call to the children of Benjamin (6:1-8)
2. Corruption and the deserved judgment (6:9-26)
3. The prophet addressed (6:27-30)

Verses 1-8. The children of Benjamin are exhorted to flee for safety on account of the evil from the north. There were probably among the Benjamites God-fearing men. Those who heeded the call fled and escaped. It is a warning message which follows: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, let my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." But they heeded it not.

Verses 9-26. They did not hear because they had uncircumcised ears, neither had they delight

in the Word of the Lord. How true this is today of the great mass of professing Christians! The Lord will now no longer restrain His fury; He will pour it out upon them. Covetousness, the love of money, as it is in our day, was the controlling passion. Prophet and priest dealt falsely; their one message, like the one message of the prophet and priest today, was peace, peace, when there was no peace. Then once more the judgment from the north is announced (verses 18-26).

Verses 27-30. In the final paragraph of this chapter the Lord speaks intimately to the prophet. He is encouraged and strengthened. He is set as a tower and as a fortress. What a position of honor! May we consider it as we are as His believing people surrounded by the flood of apostasy; that we, too, are called to be a tower and fortress.

The Prophet's Temple Address (7-9)

CHAPTER 7

1. Amend your ways and your doings (7:1-15)
2. No prayer-answer to be expected (7:16-20)
3. Sacrifices rejected; Obedience demanded (7:21-28)
4. Jerusalem's rejection (7:29-34)

Verses 1-15. We call this next address of the prophet "the temple address," because he was commanded to stand in the gate of the LORD's house. There he stood, a solitary figure, and said: "Hear the Word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." Their worship was but external. They trusted in the temple of the Lord, as if with the house itself some kind of a blessing was connected and the house would shield them from disaster. Micah gives the same delusion of the apostate people: "Yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, is not the LORD among us? no evil can come upon us" (Micah 3:11). Such a false trust in ordinances and outward worship is only too evident in Christendom also. The masses of unsaved people with their religious observances think it is a protection and insures the Lord's help and blessing. They trusted in lying words. They were thieves, murderers, adulterers, perjurers and idolators, and they thought if they go to the house of the LORD they would be delivered from these abominations. The Lord calls upon them to amend their ways and their doings, to work a better righteousness. They had made His house a den of robbers. This verse (verse 11) was quoted by our Lord in Matt. 21:13. He tells them of the fate of Shiloh when it was overthrown on account of the wickedness of Israel; such would be the fate of the temple (Psa. 78:60). They would be cast out as the whole seed of Ephraim had been cast out.

Verses 16-20. The Lord told the prophet that no prayer of intercession would be answered. "I will not hear thee." What a word this is, coming from Him, who had told Israel to cry unto Him and He would answer. They had provoked Him by making cakes to the queen of heaven. They had fallen in with the worship of a female idol, so prevalent among the idolatrous nations which surrounded them, like the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Babylonians. The Babylonian Venus, Ishtar, was called by them the queen of heaven. The Assyrian called her Beltis, the female form of Baal; they placed in the sculpture a star over her head and called her "the mistress of the heavens." The Phoenicians worshipped this "queen of heaven" under the name of Ashtoreth or Astarte. This wicked worship, with which all kinds of immoral ceremonies were connected, had been adopted by the Jews. The women made cakes to present to this goddess. Jewish tradition tells us that the image of the idol was stamped on each cake. This worship of "the queen of heaven" is perpetuated in the mystical Babylon, Rome, the great whore and mother of harlots (Rev. 17). Mary is called by Romanists "the queen of heaven" and "mistress of the heavens." It can be proven that Mariolatry is but the continuation of the Babylonish worship of the goddess they called

"queen of heaven." If the Lord was provoked to anger because the women of Israel brought cakes to this queen of heaven, how much more is He provoked to anger with the idolatries of papal Rome?

Verses 21-28. He brands their sacrifices as worthless. He gave no command concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices in the day He brought them out of Egypt. Destructive critics have built upon this verse (22) a puerile argument to prove that the law of sacrifices was not given by Moses, but introduced many centuries later. When the Lord first led them out of Egypt, He gave them no laws as to sacrifices, but asked obedience. They harkened not; nor did they in Jeremiah's day. It is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction.

Verses 29-34. The hair was cut off as a sign of mourning (Job 1:20). Jerusalem is to lament in the high places. They have defiled His house. On the heights of Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, they had burned their children as a sacrifice to Molech (2 Kings 23:10). The days were now to come when the same place should become the place of slaughter. The carcasses of the people should then be meat for the beasts of the earth; they should lie there unburied. Such was to be Jerusalem's rejection and judgment.

CHAPTER 8

1. The horrors of the invasion (8:1-3)
2. Hardened hearts and retribution (8:4-12)
3. Utter destruction threatened (8:13-17)
4. The prophet's lamentation (8:18-22)

Verses 1-3. These verses must not be detached from the preceding chapter. The division of chapters is often unfortunate in this book. The invaders from the north would even have dug out the bones of the dead. Kings, priests, prophets and people who had worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars should be exposed and spread out before the sun and moon, remain unburied and become dung. We doubt not that all this was literally done during the Chaldean invasion.

Verses 4-12. They did not repent of their wickedness. Theirs was a perpetual backsliding. The stork knows his appointed time; the turtle, the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but they had hardened their hearts in such a manner that they knew not the judgment of the Lord. Hence the retribution (9-12).

Verses 13-17. The thirteenth verse shows the desolation which will fall upon the land when the Lord arises. The words of verses 14-16 were spoken by the prophet and not by the impenitent people as some take it. The 16th verse is extremely vivid.

Verses 18-22. His heart was faint in him. He is overwhelmed with sorrow. The harvest was passed, the summer gone and they were not saved. It is a mournful outburst.

CHAPTER 9

1. The prophet's complaint and Jehovah's answer (9:1-9)
2. The cause of desolation and destruction (9:10-16)
3. The call for the mourning and wailing women (9:17-22)
4. Glorifying in the Lord in view of judgment (9:23-26)

Verses 1-9. Here again is a deplorable break. The opening verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one. The prophet still speaks. He is overwhelmed with sorrow; his eyes are fountains of tears. He weeps day and night over the slain. He wishes himself away in some wilderness, to be alone and separated from the adulterous generation. Then follows a description of the moral corruption of the people. The Lord answered him and once more asks the question: "Shall not I visit them for these things? saith the LORD; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (See chapter 5:9, 29.)

Verses 10-16. Jerusalem will be heaps, ruins and a den of dragons. The cities of Judah will be desolate. But why is it like this? Because they forsook His law, obeyed not His voice, and practiced idolatries. Therefore their portion would be wormwood and gall. They would be scattered among the nations.

Verses 17-22. The time of wailing and mourning is at hand. "For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without and the young men from the street." Pestilence was to sweep over them and enter into their habitations. Hence the call to the professional wailers to sing the mournful dirges of death. These wailing women are also called "wise women," for they dabbled in magical, occult things, in familiar spirits and in soothsaying.

Verses 23-26. The days were coming when judgment would strike Jews and Gentiles, for the uncircumcised Gentiles and for Israel, uncircumcised in heart. In view of these days of judgment the prophet exhorts to stop their boasts in wisdom, in might and in riches, for all availeth nothing. "But let him that glorieth glory in Me, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." May we also glory in Him and not in the things of the dust, the temporal, the passing things, which are but for a moment! Let us remember "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

CHAPTER 10 The Vanity of Idols

1. Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven (10:1-5)
2. The contrast: The vanity of idols and the Lord, the King of Nations (10:6-18)
3. The affliction of the prophet and his prayer (10:19-25)

Verses 1-5. The heathen paid attention to the signs of heaven, such as eclipses, comets, meteoric showers, etc. They were dismayed at these things. All they did, their customs and observances in connection with idol worship, was nothing but vanity.

Verses 6-18. Idols are nothing, but the Lord God of Israel is all. He is the King of Nations, who rules over all. He is the true God, the living God, the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth trembles and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. He made the earth by His power; He established the world by wisdom; He stretched out the heavens by His discretion. But what is man? Brutish in his knowledge.

Verses 19-25. Here we see how Jeremiah identified himself with the afflictions and sorrows of Jerusalem. In his prayer he pleads that the judgment might be only for correction and not for a complete and perpetual consummation. "O LORD correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." He calls for judgment upon the nations. Well may we see in pleading Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who is afflicted in Jerusalem's affliction, who identified himself with his people, a type and picture of Him who is greater than Jeremiah.

CHAPTER 11 The Broken Covenant and the Plot Against Jeremiah

1. The broken covenant (11:1-17)

2. The plot revealed and Jehovah's answer (11:18-23)

Verses 1-17. Jehovah had made a covenant with His people. He tells the prophet about it and the responsibility which was connected with that covenant. They were to obey His voice. Then should they be His people and He their God. And of this covenant it was written, "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant." The prophet answered the Lord: "So be it LORD" (Amen). Then he is commanded to proclaim this covenant and tell the people that they had broken the covenant. They had followed the evil example of their fathers. They had burned incense to the idol gods. Therefore the prophet again is told not to pray for this adulterous generation, "for I will not hear them in the time they cry unto Me in their trouble." Yet the Lord in spite of it all still calls them "My Beloved," though they had broken the covenant and worked lewdness. Verse 16 is used by the Spirit of God in Romans 11, the chapter which begins with the assurance that God has not cast away His people. The branches of the green olive tree are broken. Yet there is hope; they are still beloved for the Father's sake.

Verses 18-23. The Lord revealed unto him their doings. He was ignorant of it, like a lamb or an ox brought to the slaughter. They wanted to cut him off from the land of the living. He calls for vengeance upon them, which is in full keeping with the law dispensation and God's righteous government.

Righteousness characterizes the saint as well as love, and has its place where there are adversaries to that love and to the blessing of the loved people. It is the Spirit of prophecy, not the gospel, no doubt because prophecy is connected with the government of God, not with His present dealings in sovereign grace. Hence in the Revelation vengeance is called for by the saint. (Synopsis of the Bible.)

The men of Anathoth had intimidated him by saying, "Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand." The Lord answers him that their young men should die by the sword, and their sons and daughters by famine. No remnant of them should be left.

CHAPTER 12 The Prophet's Prayer and the House Forsaken, Yet Compassion

1. The prophet's prayer (12:1-6) 2. The house forsaken, yet compassion (12:7-17)

Verses 1-6. In his outburst of grief and in great mental perplexity Jeremiah states the old question, why does the righteous man suffer, why does the wicked prosper? And then the prayer for His intervention. Such will be again the case with the godly remnant in the end of this present age. They will suffer and be persecuted as godly Jeremiah was and pray as Jeremiah prayed: "Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." The imprecatory psalms are of the same prophetic meaning. Jehovah's answer tells him that greater trials were in store for him (verses 5, 6).

Verses 7-17. The house is to be forsaken. The dearly beloved is to be given into the hands of the enemies. The sword of the Lord would now devour them. But there is the warning to the nations who touch His inheritance. He will deal with them in judgment as He dealt with Judah. Then we find the promise, "I will return and have compassion on them." This is still future. The compassion for Israel comes in the day of His return.

CHAPTER 13 Signs, Warnings, and Exhortations

1. The linen girdle and the filled bottles (13:1-14)

2. Hear and give glory (13:15-21)

3. The justice of the judgment (13:22-27)

Verses 1-14. The prophet enacts a sign, that of the linen girdle. After he had put on the girdle, he was told to hide it in a hole of the rock of the Euphrates. After many days, he was commanded to dig for the girdle. It was found marred and profitable for nothing. Was this only a vision, or did the prophet actually make the long journey to the Euphrates and then repeat it after many days? The latter is quite improbable, nor can the command be called a vision. The question is what river is meant, the river Euphrates or another river by a similar name? The Hebrew word for Euphrates is "Perath," and the word river is generally added to this word. In the text here it is missing. Now, three miles north of Anathoth there was a small river by the name of "Parah" (Joshua 18:23). It probably means this place to which the prophet was commanded to go. Both words in the Hebrew spring from the same root.

The meaning of this symbolical action is explained. A girdle belonged to the priest. Israel was called to be the priestly nation. As a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so the Lord had chosen Israel to cleave unto Him, "that they might be unto Me for a people," and for a name and for a glory. And as the girdle had become marred and profitable for nothing, so even would their pride, that in which they gloried as the chosen people, be marred.

The bottles filled with wine, dashed one against the other, are the symbol of their sin intoxication and their destruction.

Verses 15-21. How patient and merciful is Jehovah! He interrupts His judgment message by calling on the people, whom He still loves, to give ear and to give glory to Jehovah. It is the utterance of the prophet, the outpouring of His love towards His people. The prophet addresses the king and the queen: "Humble yourselves." And then his heart seems to break in anticipation of their obstinacy. "But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places on account of your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive."

Verses 22-27. Wherefore? they asked. And He answers, "For the greatness of thine iniquity ... because thou hast forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood." Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it be? But could they do it themselves? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to evil." The new heart is needed (Ezek. 36); the new birth of which the Lord spoke to the teacher in Israel.

II. THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH, HIS FAITHFULNESS AND His SUFFERING

CHAPTER 14 The Great Drought, the Sword, the Famine, and the Pestilence

1. The description of the drought (14:1-6)

2. The prophet's priestly intercession (14:7-9)

3. The answer (14:10-18)

4. The renewed prayer (14:19-22)

Verses 1-6. The vivid description of the great drought is given in these verses. The little ones sent forth for water returned empty handed. It is the picture of distress.

Verses 7-9. And now the prophet's voice as intercessor is heard. Like Daniel (chapter 9), in his great prayer Jeremiah acknowledges the nation's sin as his own. But he trusts in the Lord and knows that He is "the hope of Israel," the Saviour. Blessed statements of faith which came from His

lips: "Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us--we are called by Thy Name--leave us not" (verse 9)! The Saviour and hope of Israel has surely not given up His people, though judgment had to do its work.

Verses 10-18. They wandered away from Him, saith the Lord in answering Jeremiah. Their iniquities will be remembered and their sins visited. This is the demand of a righteous God. He is not going to hear their cry; the sword of the famine and the pestilence will consume them. Jeremiah tells the Lord about the message of the false prophets. They had promised peace, just as the false teachers in Christendom do today. But they prophesied lies in His name; He had not sent them, nor commanded them nor had He spoken to them.

Verses 19-22. What soul stirring petitions these are. It is not the impenitent nation which speaks, but the prophet is pleading in the place of the people and for them.

CHAPTER 15 The Prophet's Deep Soul-Exercise

1. The answer (15:1-9)

2. The prophet's grief and sorrow and Jehovah's answer (15:10-21)

Verses 1-9. The preceding prayer is now answered and the Lord tells Jeremiah that if Moses and Samuel, these two great men of intercessory prayer, were pleading, judgment would not be averted. What is in store for those who are appointed to death, for the sword, for the famine, for captivity, will be accomplished. There is no escape. They will be removed among all kingdoms on account of Manasseh's great sin (2 Kings 21:11-15). The terrors of judgment are described in verses 7-9. Their children will be taken; widows increase; the mother of seven children faints, because they are all taken from her.

Verses 10-21. Jeremiah is overwhelmed. He pronounces a "woe" upon himself and declares that his mother has given birth to one who is a man of strife, of contention to the whole land. He has faithfully discharged his duty; he loved his people and they hated him beyond measure. Every one cursed him, as if he were a wicked man. What anguish of soul this implies! But then the Lord was near to cheer and comfort him, as He is near to us when we are in sorrow and all is dark and we are in despair. It would be well with him and with those, who, like Jeremiah, trust the Lord. But the remnant, too, would suffer with the nation's portion (13-14). This brings out another prayer from Jeremiah's heart. He pleads for revenge upon his adversaries, and then prays, "Take me not away in Thy longsuffering, know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." But while he prayed he also used the Word of God. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." He fed on the bread of life. The word was unto him the joy and rejoicing of his heart. He knew from the Word that he was called by His Name. And we also can turn to the Word and feed on it. But how few can say, "Thy Word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart." That Word on which Jeremiah fed, which filled his sorrowful heart, led him to separation. It will lead us also to separation in the evil day of departure from God and the threatening judgment. He sat alone; He refused to have anything to do with the assembly of mockers, those who denied His Word and His Name, who listened to the false prophets with their false message. Verse 18 must be interpreted in the sense that Jeremiah speaks as representing the godly remnant of Israel. There was such a remnant then in the midst of the wicked mass, there will be such a remnant again in the future, during the great tribulation, or, as Jeremiah calls that time, "The time of Jacob's trouble." They suffer in the trials and judgments; they are fearful, yet trusting. Jeremiah is representative of this remnant. The answer the Lord gives in verses 19-21 must be explained in the same light. Verse 21 will find its final fulfillment of the future remnant when the Lord returns and redeems them from the hand of the wicked and the hand of the terrible, the two beasts of Revelation 13.

The Coming Calamities: Restoration Promised, Ruin Imminent on Account of Judah's Sin and Concerning the Sabbath (16-17)

CHAPTER 16

1. The coming calamities (16:1-13)
2. The coming days of restoration and blessing (16:14-21)

Verses 1-13. In view of the coming calamities Jeremiah is bidden to remain unmarried and not to raise a family. The verses which describe the coming calamities need no further annotations.

Verses 14-21. The great dispersion was announced by the Lord in the preceding verse: "Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there ye shall serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor." But is this to last forever? Is this dispersion permanent? Will they always be homeless wanderers? The next verse gives the answer: "I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." They will be brought back from the land of the north and from all lands where they had been driven. It will be a greater deliverance than the deliverance out of Egypt. Critics have found fault with these verses: "They are out of place here, but whether inserted by accident, or whether to modify the painful impression of the prophecy of judgment in which they are inserted, we cannot say" (Prof. A.S. Peake). They are not out of place, nor inserted by some unknown hand. The Lord declares His gracious purposes which will yet be accomplished. That these verses were not fulfilled in the return of the small remnant from Babylon is obvious. They will be fulfilled in the future, when the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be re-established in the land. Then the so-called "lost tribes" will be found again by Him for whom they were never lost, "For Mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hid from My face neither is their iniquity hid from Mine eyes." He will send fishers and hunters to bring them forth. It is the same of which our Lord speaks in Matt. 24:31. The elect of whom the Lord speaks are not a spiritual Israel, but the elect nation Israel. Then the voice of the prophet is heard in verse 19 with a blessed prophetic declaration: "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." It denotes the conversion of the world, which--in prophecy never precedes the restoration of Israel, but always follows that great coming event. (See Rom. 11:12, 15; Acts 15:14-17).

CHAPTER 17

1. Judah's sin (17:1-4)
2. The curse and the blessing (17:5-11)
3. The worship of Jeremiah (17:12-18)
4. Concerning the Sabbath (17:19-27)

Verses 1-4. The sin of Judah was idolatry, engraven with a pen of iron, the point of a diamond, upon their heart (from whence it proceeded) and upon the horns of their altars. They had destroyed but a few years before the asherim (translated groves, a kind of sacred post), and now their children turned back to the abominable heathen cults. His anger and judgment must now be their portion.

Verses 5-11. A curse is pronounced upon him who trusteth in man, who departeth from the Lord. For such a one there is no hope; he shall not see good; he must be an outcast, like the heath in the desert. And such is the natural condition of man, his heart is departed from the Lord, he trusteth in himself, making flesh his arm to defend and to uphold. But blessing is for the man who trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. Verse 8 contains the same truth as Psalm 1:3. It is a description of the God-fearing in Israel, who knew the Lord, trusted and hoped in Him. He had called them to

this place of blessing; He had encouraged them to trust in Him; He had manifested His glory and His power in their midst. But they turned away from Him, they leaned not on Him, but on the arm of flesh, on Egypt. The heart is the source of it, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The question, "Who can know it?" is answered, "I the LORD search the heart." He has sounded the depths of it and in His omniscience knew the shameful history of Israel, and all their backsliding. So He knew and knows what we are, yet in sovereign love and grace He has loved us and bears with His own.

Verses 12-18. The worship of the prophet stands here also for the worship and soul exercise of the godly remnant of the Lord's people. The sanctuary of the godly is the glorious high throne, that throne which we know as the throne of grace. In verse 14 there is expressed by the prophet in behalf of the God-fearing the need of His salvation. They mocked the prophet, "Where is the Word of the LORD? Let it come." So they will hate the remnant of the future (Isa. 66:5). And we know the prediction in Peter's second Epistle (2 Peter 3). Verse 18 corresponds to the imprecatory psalms. What Jeremiah prays, was fulfilled upon that evil generation; and some day the imprecatory psalms will be fulfilled when the Lord deals again in judgment with the nation.

Verses 19-27. Kuenen and other critics deny the Jeremianic authorship of this passage. It is not out of keeping with the message of the prophet. The Sabbath of which he is commanded to speak is the standard of Israel's spiritual condition, for it is the weekly reminder of Israel's covenant relation with Jehovah. If they neglected the divine command, as they always did in their departure from the Lord, it was the outward evidence that they had broken the covenant. If they really returned to the Lord they would show it by keeping the solemn Sabbaths and the Lord would bless them. But they obeyed not. This passage as well as others is used by the pernicious Seventh Day Adventistic cult, which denies grace and turns back to the law. But the Sabbath has nothing to do with the Church, nor has the Church anything to do with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is an institution of the law in connection with Israel. The great documents addressed to the church, the Epistles, never mention the Sabbath once, nor is there anywhere in the Epistles an exhortation to keep the Sabbath.

CHAPTER 18 The Potter and the Clay

1. In the potter's house and the message (18:1-17)

2. The plot against the prophet and his prayer (18:18-23)

Verses 1-17. He was commanded to go to the house of a potter and watch his work. The vessel Jeremiah sees fashioned out of clay is marred; it did not turn out well. Then the clay was taken up again and made in another vessel as it seemed good to the potter to make it. Then came the message: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." If the creature of the dust can do as he pleases with the clay, how much more the Sovereign God. The Holy Spirit evidently uses this in Romans 9:20-32.

If a nation is threatened with destruction and that nation turns to the Lord, He will repent of the evil pronounced upon them. This is fully illustrated in the case of Jonah's prediction, God-given as it was, of Nineveh's overthrow. Nineveh repented and the judgment was not executed upon that generation. But if the Lord has promised a nation good and that nation does evil in His sight, He will repent of the good He had promised unto them. Thus the potter's action is used to convey a great lesson, the lesson of God's sovereignty, to do as He pleaseth, yet always in perfect righteousness. If Israel had owned then the sin and guilt and turned to the Lord, He would have acted in sovereign grace towards them. Their answer was: "There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imaginations of his evil heart." What depravity and wicked boldness these words reveal! They refused to believe the message of the Lord. They pushed aside the hand which would snatch them out of the fire. They acknowledged the evil heart and deliberately

declared to continue in wicked defiance of Jehovah. And is it any better in professing Christendom today? The answer of the Lord, an answer of kindness and long-suffering follows.

Verses 18-23. They arose in rebellion against the messenger of Jehovah. They hated him. They would smite him with the tongue, malign him, bring false accusations against him. But the man of God does not take up their contentions. Like Hezekiah when the enemy reviled him, Jeremiah turned to the Lord. He tells the Lord all about it. Then he prays for judgment to fall upon them. Here once more we must look upon these words prophetically. Such expressions as used by the prophet here will, during the great tribulation, come from the lips of the remnant of Israel, who suffer from their enemies and who righteously call for heaven's vengeance, which will fall upon these enemies when Jehovah, our Lord, is manifested in glory.

CHAPTER 19 The Broken Bottle

1. The broken bottle and the message (19:1-13)

2. The fate announced in the court of the Lord's house (19:14-15)

Verses 1-13. He was to get a potter's earthen bottle accompanied by elders and priests, and go to the valley of the son of Hinnom. There he should proclaim the words Jehovah would breathe into him. The message is another judgment message and needs no further comment. In Tophet, the valley of Hinnom, they had worked their abominations, burnt their sons with fire. Now it should become the valley of slaughter, so that their carcasses should be eaten by the fowls and wild beasts. He would cause them to eat the flesh of their loved ones. It was fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem (Lam. 4:10). Then he broke the bottle as a sign that thus the people and the city should be broken.

Verses 14-15. When the prophet returned from the valley of Hinnom he took his place in the court of the LORD's house and declared the fate of the city.

CHAPTER 20 Pashur.-Jeremiah's Perplexity and Complaint

1. Pashur and Jeremiah (20:1-6)

2. Jeremiah's great perplexity and complaint (20:7-18)

Verses 1-6. A great scene now follows the message in connection with the broken bottle. The great Pashur, the chief governor in the house of the LORD had heard of the message. He smites Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks, which must have been some form of cruel torture by which the victim was rendered helpless, besides being exposed to the vulgarity of the people who passed by and would taunt him. In this position Jeremiah remained all night before the high gate of Benjamin. In the morning he was released. He then speaks as only an inspired prophet can speak. His name Pashur (which means "most noble") should now be "Magor-missabib," which means "terror on every side." The awful fate of Pashur and his own is predicted. He is dumb, perhaps even then terror-stricken, as he looks into the flashing eyes of the man of God and listens to the fiery words.

Verses 7-18. What follows now is a most passionate outburst, revealing an unspeakable emotion of the soul, as perhaps nowhere else in the prophetic Scriptures. Even critics acknowledge this as "one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of his prophetic consciousness." "LORD," he cries, "Thou has deceived me, and I was deceived." The Revised Version has translated it, "Thou has persuaded me," but that is not correct. He acknowledges himself deceived, or enticed. He is troubled with doubt. He speaks of his great trials. He is a laughing stock--he is a reproach and a derision all the day. He tried to stop mentioning Him and not to speak any more in His name; but he tried to turn back upon his commission. But then the fire burned within him; his conscience became as a burning fire. He had

heard defaming, his best friends had said "We will denounce him." They thought of taking revenge on him.

But suddenly faith is victorious. He must have remembered the words of the Lord in connection with his commission, "For I am with thee saith the LORD, to deliver thee" (chapter 1). And so he cries out, "The LORD is with me." He prays to see His vengeance on his enemies, for unto Him he had revealed His cause. And then the singing! "Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD; for He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of the evil-doers." Such is the experience of the godly remnant in fears and doubts, troubled on all sides, fleeing to Jehovah, till the singing times come, when He appears for their deliverance and the hallelujahs will sweep the earth and the heavens.

But his grief overwhelms him. Perhaps he thought again of all the sneers and mockeries, of all the harsh words, the unfaithful friends and the physical pain he endured. He is occupied with himself and the soul struggle begins anew and culminates in a near collapse. He curses, as Job did, the day in which he was born.

CHAPTER 21 The Prophetic Warning

1. Zedekiah's inquiry (21:1-2)

2. Jehovah's answer through Jeremiah (21:3-14)

Verses 1-2. It has been said that this chapter is historically misplaced and therefore must be considered an evidence of the composite authorship of this book. The Spirit of God for some reason unknown to us has put it in this place. Zedekiah sent unto Jeremiah Pashur (a different one from the Pashur in the preceding chapter) to inquire as to Nebuchadrezzar, the King of Babylon. This is of course Nebuchadnezzar. The form of his name found in Jeremiah is derived more correctly from the Babylonian, which is "Nabukudurri-usur." Here the great king is mentioned for the first time in Jeremiah. The wicked Zedekiah may have remembered God's dealing with Hezekiah when the Lord annihilated the army of Sennacherib, the Assyrian. Then Zedekiah said: "Peradventure the LORD will deal with us according to all His wondrous works, that he may go up from US."

Verses 3-14. Zedekiah (whose name was Mattaniah), the ungodly king, who had been made king by Nebuchadrezzar after he had carried away captives from Jerusalem, heard a message of judgment from Jeremiah. The Babylonian king's army was again before the city, because Zedekiah had revolted and broken his agreement with the king. How could Zedekiah even imagine that a righteous Lord had a message of peace for him? The Lord Himself will now fight against Jerusalem and its wicked king. The enemy will do the appointed judgment work: "he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy." The king is to be taken captive. Then he addresses the people and the house of David in no uncertain words, which need no further comment.

Concerning the Kings of Judah (22:1-23:8)

CHAPTER 22

1. The message in the house of the king of Judah (22:1-9)

2. Touching Shallum, the King of Judah (22:11-12)

3. Concerning Jehoiakim and his fate (22:13-19)

4. Concerning Coniah and his fate (22:20-30)

Verses 1-10. What a figure Jeremiah was as he stood, obedient to the divine command, before the royal palace to deliver his God-given message! The door of mercy still is open. Let them execute judgment, let them stop oppressing the stranger, the widows and orphans, let them shed no longer innocent blood, then the house of David shall prosper. If not, the house shall become a desolation. The nations astonished at the destruction and overthrow of the city will hear the answer that it is "because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and worshipped other gods and served them."

Verses 11-12. He is also called Jehoahaz (1 Chron. 3:15; 2 Kings 23:30, 31). He was carried away by Pharaoh-Necho into Egypt; he will return.

Verses 13-19. This wicked king and his evil doings are described in these verses. He was a cruel despot, who built his palaces by forced labor; covetousness, shedding of innocent blood, oppression and violence characterized his reign. Then his ignominious burial, the burial of an ass, is predicted. It means that an ass has no burial and so Jehoiakim would have no burial; he is the only king of Judah whose burial is not recorded. It may be possible that Jeremiah added these words by divine command, after this king had cut the roll to pieces and burned it in the fire (Jer. 36). The prophet wrote the same words contained in the roll (all these chapters beginning with chapter 2 constitute the roll the king burned), and many others were added. Most likely because he had done that wicked work in cutting the Word of God to pieces and casting it into the fire, this special shameful end was announced. Beware you cutters of the Bible, you mutilators of the Word of God, your end, too, will be an ignominious end!

Verses 20-30. Coniah, also called Jehoiachin, Joiakim and Joachim, after a brief reign of a few months had been carried away to Babylon to die there. Then the prophet's voice breaks in with a mighty appeal, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." Every true believer feels like shouting these words in the present days of departure from God and rejection of His Word. Then there is a prediction as to Jeconiah, "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." A curse was thus pronounced upon the house of David in the line of Solomon. But there was still the line of Nathan the son of David. Messiah, the Son of David, could therefore not spring from the line of Solomon; he must come from the line of Nathan. Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary of Nazareth was a son of David through the line of Solomon, the disinherited line; but Mary of Nazareth was a daughter of David through the line of Nathan.

CHAPTER 23:1-8

1. The false shepherds (23:1-4)

2. The True Shepherd (23:5-8)

Verses 1-4. The word "pastors" means "shepherds." Ezekiel received a larger message about these false shepherds, the hirelings who did not feed the flock. (See annotations of Ezekiel 34.) The scattered remnant of the Lord's flock (not the Church, but the remnant of Israel) will yet be gathered out of all countries, be fruitful and increase, no longer fearful, dismayed or in want. It is a prophecy concerning the time when the Shepherd of Israel, their King as well, is manifested.

Verses 5-8. A great Messianic prophecy follows. "The Righteous Branch," the Son of David, whose name is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jehovah Zdidkenu) is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King who will reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth. The prophecy is unfulfilled. He came as the Son of David, the promised King. He offered that kingdom to Israel; they rejected Him. But He is coming again, and in that day of glory this great prediction will be accomplished. His people Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25-27). Their wonderful restoration from the north and from all the countries will then take place.

CHAPTER 23:9-40 Condemnation of the False Prophets

1. Jeremiah's lament on account of the false prophets (23:9-14)
2. The condemnation of these prophets (23:15-32)
3. Forgotten and forsaken (23:33-40)

Verses 9-14. The prophet is overwhelmed because of the wicked prophets, because in the LORD's house wickedness was found. The false prophets of Samaria had led the people into idolatry and the prophets of Judah were guilty of all kinds of immoralities. Like priests, like people; they all became unto the Lord as Sodom, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem like Gomorrah.

Verses 15-32. They will be fed with wormwood and will have to drink gall. On account of their false message of peace (verses 17, 18), the whirlwind of divine judgment will fall upon them and upon the head of the wicked. They prophesied lies in the name of Jehovah; they were prophets of the deceit of their own heart. They tried to make the people forget the Name of Jehovah. Such is today still the work of apostate teachers, who speak out of the deceit of their hearts, who prophesy lies and who aim at the Name which is above every Name. How different is the word of the Lord, from the idle dreams of these false prophets. "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (verse 29). Three times the Lord declares He is against these prophets (verses 30-32).

Verses 33-40. If they ask the question, "What is the burden of the LORD?" the answer is to be, "I will cast you off." The burden, or word of the Lord is not to be mentioned again to them. They will be utterly forgotten and forsaken, with everlasting reproach and perpetual shame upon them.

CHAPTER 24 The Two Baskets of Figs

1. The vision of the two baskets of figs (24:1-3)
2. The vision interpreted (24:4-10)

Verses 1-3. Jeconiah, with the choicest of the nation, had been carried away into captivity. A large portion remained, and were not taken away, and these attributed their escape from exile to some goodness in them. At that time the prophet had a vision. He saw set before the temple two baskets of figs. The one basket was filled with good figs, the second basket with bad figs.

Verses 4-10. The good figs are symbolical of those who were carried away into captivity. They were sent away for their good. He promises them good things. They are going to return; He is going to build them; He will plant them. More than that, He will give them a heart to know that He is the Lord. "For they shall return unto Me with their whole heart." They are never to be plucked up. This prophecy evidently goes beyond the return of the small remnant from Babylon, yet partially at least it was fulfilled. The bad figs are those who remained with Zedekiah in Jerusalem, but they also should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, "to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt and a curse.

CHAPTER 25 The Seventy Years' Captivity and the Judgment of the Nations

1. The retrospect (25:1-7)
2. The seventy years' captivity announced (25:8-11)
3. The punishment of Babylon and its king (25:12-14)
4. The wine-cup of fury for the nations (25:15-29)

5. The day of the LORD and wrath of God (25:30-38)

Verses 1-7. The prophet in the fourth year of Jehoiakim addresses the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. In this eventful year the battle of Carchemish was fought and Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt. The supremacy of Babylon had been insured. At this critical time the prophet gives a retrospect of his ministry among them. From the thirteenth year of Josiah he had spoken to them, but they had not heard. The Lord sent other servants, too, but they did not hear. He puts before them their stubbornness and how they provoked the Lord to anger.

Verses 8-11. And now the solemn verdict is announced. The northern power is coming against this land, headed by King Nebuchadnezzar, who is here called for the first time by the Lord, "My servant." All mirth and joy will be taken from them; the whole land shall be a desolation, and they shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

Verses 12-14. When the seventy years are ended the Babylonian nation and its king (Belshazzar) would be punished for their iniquity. All that is written in this book of Jeremiah, concerning Babylon is to be accomplished (including the final desolation). Daniel in Babylon, when he read the book of Jeremiah, dwelt perhaps on this passage, and turned to the Lord in that remarkable prayer recorded in the ninth chapter of the book which bears his name.

Verses 15-29. While the Lord thus judged Jerusalem, should the other nations go unpunished? And He answers, "Ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts" (verse 29). This prophecy is most remarkable. It predicts a world war. All nations shall drink and be moved and be mad because of the sword. It includes all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth (verse 26). Have we not seen something like this during the past, most horrible war of history? And may this not be the prelude to the day of the Lord, when these nations will have to face the judge and judgment?

Verses 30-38. The Yom Jehovah, the day of the LORD, is now announced by the prophet. It is that great future day ushered in by the visible and glorious manifestation of the Lord. All the prophets speak of that day as the day of consummation and glory. It is equally prominent in the New Testament (Matt. 24:30; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Rev. 19:11-21, etc.). Jeremiah beholds Him coming from above, with a shout, not the shout with which He calls His own together (1 Thess. 4:17), but the shout of judging wrath. He will plead with all flesh. The slain of the Lord shall be many. The howling of the shepherds, the false leaders, because their end is come, concludes this great vision.

CHAPTER 26 Threatened with Death and His Deliverance

1. The temple like Shiloh, and Jerusalem to be a curse (26:1-7)

2. Threatened with death (26:8-11)

3. Jeremiah's defense (26:12-15)

4. History remembered and the prophet's deliverance (26:16-24)

Verses 1-7. We are now taken back to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. (Compare with chapter 7.) The Lord still waits in patience for their repentance. With holy boldness the prophet stands in a place where the worshippers pass to enter the temple and announces the message. The temple is to be like Shiloh, that is forsaken (Psa. 78:60). Jerusalem is to be a curse.

Verses 8-11. Then he was arrested for his faithfulness and threatened with death, "Thou shalt surely die." The priests and the prophets were his accusers before the princes. How often this has

been repeated in the history of God's true witnesses! During pagan Rome as well as papal Rome, the false priests and false prophets hated and despised God's witnesses and persecuted them. It is so in our times.

Verses 12-15. He makes his defense in a few dignified words. He tells them he is Jehovah's messenger. He tells them that he is in their hands, but warns them if they kill him they shed innocent blood. This courage was born of faith. He knows that he is in His hands.

Verses 16-24. The princes and people were deeply impressed and declared that he was not worthy of death. This encouraged certain elders to speak, in whose heart some fear seems to have been left. They remembered the prophet Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, who spoke similar words in the days of Hezekiah (Micah 3:12). Hezekiah did not have Micah killed. They warned against so rash a deed. They also mentioned the case of the prophet Urijah, who had also prophesied, as Jeremiah did. He had fled to Egypt, but was brought back, then Jehoiakim killed him. We do not know why his case is mentioned in this connection, unless it is to show the difference between good Hezekiah and wicked Jehoiakim. Then Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, who was governor under Nebuchadnezzar, stood by him, and he was delivered.

CHAPTER 27 The Optimism of the False Prophets Contradicted

1. The call of Nebuchadnezzar to be the servant of God (27:1-11)
2. The call to submit and to serve the king of Babylon (27:12-22)

Verses 1-11. It was in the earlier part of the reign of Zedekiah (Jehoiakim in verse 1 is a clerical error, see verses 3 and 12) that Jeremiah is commanded to make bonds and yokes to put them on his neck; then he was to send them to the surrounding nations by the ambassadors at the court of Zedekiah. The verses which follow are of much importance and interest. God speaks as Creator, and in His sovereignty He appoints Nebuchadnezzar as head over the nations and over the beasts of the field, also over the fowls of heaven (Dan. 2:38), not permanently, but for a time. God appointed a new form of government, because Jerusalem had failed, and the theocratic government as vested in the house of David was to pass away. An imperial head is chosen by the Lord from among the Gentiles. He constitutes Nebuchadnezzar His servant; with him and his rule begin the times of the Gentiles. He is the golden head in the dream-image he saw, which young Daniel interpreted by Divine revelation. The times of the Gentiles are fully revealed in Daniel's great prophecies. The predicted end of these times are not passed into history; we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. They end with the second, visible coming of Christ, when Gentile world-dominion, as it started with Nebuchadnezzar, will end, and the kingdom of heaven begins.

This fact--that God has committed power in this world to a man--is very remarkable. In the case of Israel, man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Now God abandons this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above); and, casting off Israel whom He had chosen out from the nations, grouping the latter around the elect people and His own throne in Israel, He subjects the world to one head, and committing power unto man, He places him under a new trial, to prove whether he will own the God who gave him power, and make those happy who are subjected to him. when he can do whatever he will in this world.

Whoever refuses now the new governmental order will be punished by the Lord; the nations that put their neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, to serve him, will remain in their land.

Verses 12-22. He speaks to the king and to the priests and calls them to submit to the new government established with Nebuchadnezzar. He urges them not to believe the lying prophets with their false, optimistic message, who promised smooth things. Every message they uttered, contradicted the Word of God. It is the same in Christendom today. The rationalistic critics have a message of unscriptural optimism concerning the conditions of this age, which contradicts

everything made known in the prophetic Word. Part of the vessels from the temple had been carried away. The false prophets said that these vessels would shortly be returned. The Lord dispels this lying message, for He reveals through His prophet that the remaining vessels shall also be taken to Babylon.

CHAPTER 28

1. Hananiah, the false prophet (28:1-11)
2. The judgment of Hananiah (28:12-17)

Verses 1-11. One of these lying prophets became very bold, and declared that he had a message from the Lord that the yoke of the Babylonian king was to be broken, and that within two years the temple vessels would be brought back. Jeremiah said "Amen"--let it be so! But he knew it could not be so, for the Lord had spoken to him; he gives a test. Then Hananiah became still more arrogant. Jeremiah had about his neck the yoke (chapter 27:2). Hananiah took it off and broke it and declared again that within two years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar should be broken. What applause he must have earned from the unbelieving masses about him!

Verses 12-17. Instead of yokes of wood there should be yokes of iron, the prophet tells Hananiah. He exposes him as a deceiver whom the Lord had not sent, and announces his fate, that he should die this same year. He died in the seventh month of the same year.

CHAPTER 29 Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles

1. Jeremiah's letter (29:1-23)
2. Concerning Shemaiah and his false prophecies (29:24-32)

Verses 1-23. King Zedekiah sent Elasah and Gemariah on a diplomatic mission to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah used the occasion to send a letter by them to the exiles. The letter first of all makes it clear that their stay in Babylon will not be transitory. They are to settle down, build homes, many, rear families, take wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters. They were to seek the peace of Babylon, for Babylon's peace would mean their own peace. The latter injunction has often been forgotten by the Jews during the past 1900 years, since their great dispersion; often have they fomented strife among the nations where they are strangers.

The false prophets had predicted a speedy return. Some of these false prophets had gone with them to Babylon and were present in the prison camp on the banks of the river Chebar. We read in Ezekiel 11:3 that they ridiculed the Divine command and gave wicked counsel. They felt themselves secure. Ezekiel continued the message of Jeremiah. (See annotations of Ezekiel.) Once more the seventy years are mentioned and what is to take place after they have expired. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." He promises an answer to their cry, and if they seek Him, He will be found. How gracious and merciful He is towards His own! In His own time all His gracious purposes will be fully accomplished in that nation, as they were partially accomplished in the return of a remnant after the exile. Verse 14 speaks of the larger return "gathered out from all the nations." But those who persistently continued in disobedience, who listened to the false prophets will suffer the predicted fate; for such there will be no deliverance. Two of the false prophets are mentioned by name, Ahab and Zedekiah (not the king). Besides being false prophets, they were adulterers and whoremongers. King Nebuchadnezzar roasted them in the fire (22-23).

Verses 24-32. Shemaiah, a Nehelamite, which means "the dreamer," was also in Babylon, and when the captives received the letter from Jeremiah, he answered the letter. The letter was received by a certain Zephaniah, of whom he inquired, "Why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" When Zephaniah received this letter he read it

to Jeremiah. The Lord exposes the Nehelamite as a deceiver, and his judgment is announced.

The Glorious Future of the Nation (30-31)

CHAPTER 30

1. The time of Jacob's trouble (30:1-11)
2. Zion's desperate condition and the promise of deliverance (30:12-17)
3. Restoration and glory (30:18-24)

Verses 1-11. The critics have made havoc with this great prophecy. De Wette, Hitzig, and other rationalists, claim to have discovered that this chapter, and those which follow, are the work of the spurious "second Isaiah." The critics, with their present day echoes in different colleges, reject these chapters as not being Jeremianic. They are totally wrong. This great prophecy, which begins with the thirtieth chapter, is quite in order after all these judgment messages, announcing the doom of Jerusalem and of the nation. What then about the future, that future which all their fathers had cherished, the promises which rested upon the covenant Jehovah made with David? Was now everything to be blotted out and no national hope left? The last siege of Jerusalem was in progress; soon all the threatened judgments would pass fully into history. How perfectly in order is it that now should be given a message of the glorious future of the nation.

Jeremiah is commanded to write in a book all the words Jehovah had spoken; quite sufficient evidence that Jeremiah is the author and that this book is not a patchwork of different supplementers, redactors and compilers.

The first promise in verse three is concerning the coming days in which the people Israel and Judah will return to their God-given land to possess it. Has this promise been fulfilled? Expositors generally say that it was fulfilled in the return from the captivity. But this is not so. Here is a promised return not only of the house of Judah, but a return of the ten tribes also. This has never taken place. In spite of the "British-Israel" hallucination, every sane Bible reader realizes that the house of Israel is still scattered among the nations. This restoration promise will be accomplished in the future. Then we hear what will precede that restoration. It will be a time of great trouble, even the time of Jacob's trouble (Matt. 24; Mark 13), the great tribulation revealed in other portions of the prophetic Word, notably in Daniel and Revelation. When that time comes "Jacob will be saved out of it." The yoke of the last Gentile world-power (the revived Roman Empire, the ten-horned Beast of Dan. 7 and Rev. 13) will then be broken (verse 8) and they will serve the true David, David's Lord and David's Son, our Lord (verse 9). Then follows the message of comfort. How well history has confirmed this one sentence of verse 11: "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee."

Verses 12-17. Here is a reminder of Zion's desperate condition and shameful history and how He had to chastise His people and wound them with the wound of an enemy. Such is still their lot and will be down to the end of this age, a people scattered and afflicted, devoured and spoiled by the nations. But when the time comes, the time of mercy for Zion, her enemies will be dealt with. In arrogant unbelief, these nations, so called "Christian nations," said "Zion is an Outcast"--"whom no man seeketh after" (verse 17); but the Lord says, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds."

Verses 18-24. The city then will be built again. The voices of praise and joy will be heard once more. He will glorify and increase them. He will be their God and they shall be His people. The whirlwind will strike "the head of the wicked," the wicked false king, the false Messiah, Antichrist. The next chapter is the continuation of this great prophecy.

CHAPTER 31

1. The home-going of the nation (31:1-9)
2. The joy of salvation (31:10-14)
3. The preceding tribulation, sorrow and repentance (31:15-21)
4. Assurance (31:22-26)
5. The new covenant (31:27-34)
6. The everlasting nation (31:35-40)

Verses 1-9. Sovereign grace will bring them back and give them the songs of salvation. It is true of Israel "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee";--it is equally true of us. What a day of joy it will be when they go back home once more, never to leave the old homeland again! Then the watchmen on mount Ephraim cry, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God." Can there be anything more touching and beautiful than verses 8-9?

Verses 10-14. The nations are addressed. oh! that the great nations of today might have an ear to hear this message, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock." His promises made to Israel will not fail. The nations should understand, as they do not, that Israel will yet become the head of all the nations of the earth. What singing that will be in that day of which the prophet speaks (verse 12). What rejoicing after their sorrow! What fullness will be theirs!

Verses 15-21. Rachel weeping for her children (verse 15) is quoted in Matthew 2 in connection with the killing of the boys in Bethlehem. It has also a future fulfillment, when once more Satan will manifest his power as the murderer during the tribulation. But the promise, "They shall come again from the land of the enemy" and "Thy children shall come again to their own border," clearly shows that captivity is likewise meant from which Rachel's children (Joseph and Benjamin, i.e., Ephraim) shall return after the final tribulation and weeping. Physical resurrection is not in view here. Therefore, the next verse speaks of Ephraim moaning and in repentance. Then God's gracious answer "Is Ephraim my dear son?--I will surely have mercy upon him."

Verses 22-26. Backsliding Israel is exhorted and the assurance is given, "A woman shall compass a man." It refers to Israel as the woman, the timid, weak, forsaken one, who now will compass a man: that is have power given unto her to become the ruler. (Some have translated this difficult passage, "The woman shall be turned into a man.") Then follows the promise of assurance.

Verses 27-34. In the preceding verse we read that Jeremiah awoke, so that this message must have come to him in a vision by night, and sweet was his sleep. How refreshing must have been to his troubled soul this wonderful prophecy! The great prediction in these verses is the one concerning the new covenant. This covenant is not made with Gentiles, nor even with the church as so often erroneously stated. It is the new covenant to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This is fully confirmed in the Epistle to Hebrews (Hebrews 8:8-13). The old covenant is the law-covenant, which the Lord did not make with Gentiles, but with Israel exclusively. The new covenant is of grace. The ground of this new covenant is the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His blood, as we learn from His own words when He instituted the supper. He died for that nation, and therefore all Israel will yet receive the promised blessing of this new covenant. This prophecy is therefore still unfulfilled, for Israel does not enjoy this new covenant now. In the meantime, while Israel has not yet the blessings of this new covenant, Gentiles, who by nature are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, believing in Christ, possess the blessings of this new covenant to the full. In that coming day of Israel's return,

the nation, Israel and Judah, will be born again, know the Lord, and their sins will be remembered no more.

Verses 35-40. This word of Jehovah is a complete answer to those in Christendom who think that God has cast away Israel, that they are no longer the chosen people. The Lord makes a condition, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done saith the LORD." Neither has heaven been measured, neither has the depth of the earth been searched out, nor will this ever be accomplished. What a faithful covenant-keeping God He is! Verses 38-40 have never been fulfilled in the past.

CHAPTER 32 Jeremiah in Prison

1. Shut up in the court of the prison (32:1-5)
2. The revelation of the Lord concerning Hanameel (32:6-15)
3. The prophet's prayer (32:16-25)
4. Jehovah's answer (32:26-44)

Verses 1-5. The siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. It was in the tenth year, a year later (39:1) that we find Jeremiah in prison. In order to understand this imprisonment Jeremiah 37:11-21 must be consulted. He was first thrown as a prisoner into the house of Jonathan the scribe. It was a dungeon, perhaps some underground place. He was consigned there. It was a horrible place, for Jeremiah was afraid he might die there (37:20). Zedekiah seems to have been somewhat favorably inclined towards him. He asked him secretly to his palace and after Jeremiah told the king, in answer to his question about a word from the Lord, that the king should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, Zedekiah on his request released him from the dungeon and put him into the court of the prison, and was kept by the king's order from starvation (37:21). Here, in our chapter, is the full text of his faithful message; had it been less faithful he might have been released.

Verses 6-15. The coming of his cousin with the request to buy his field in Anathoth is divinely announced. The right of redemption was Jeremiah's. (See Leviticus 25:25.) Hanameel came, and Jeremiah, realizing that it was of the Lord, bought the field, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver. The sale was legally transacted and executed; there being two rolls, one sealed, the other open. It was all delivered to Baruch, the faithful secretary of the prophet, mentioned here for the first time. He was instructed to put all in an earthen vessel. By his action the prophet proved his simple faith in the promised return.

Verses 16-25. What a beautiful prayer it is which came from the lips of the prisoner! He acknowledges first of all, as we all do in believing prayer the power of God, that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Then he speaks of the loving kindness and righteousness of the God of Israel, and mentions the past history of the nation. What the Lord had predicted against the city and the nation had been done; the city was given to the Chaldeans. "What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold Thou seest it." He then mentions the fact that the Lord had told him to buy that field. Then the prayer is interrupted, like Daniel's prayer.

Verses 26-44. The answer the Lord gave to praying Jeremiah is twofold. Jeremiah had said in faith, "There is nothing too hard for the LORD." The Lord answered him, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" Then He announces first of all the fate of the doomed city (verses 28-35). After this comes once more the message of comfort and peace looking forward to that blessed future when Israel is gathered out of all countries, brought back to the land--when they shall be His people (verses 36-44).

CHAPTER 33 New Message of Restoration and Blessing

1. The call to pray and Jerusalem's overthrow (33:1-5)
2. Future blessing and glory (33:6-14)
3. The Branch of Righteousness; Jerusalem's new name (33:15-18)
4. Jehovah's faithfulness (33:19-26)

Verses 1-5. Jeremiah is still in prison, as we learn from the first verse. The siege of Jerusalem is on. Then the Lord said, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." What an offer and what an assurance! Then the Lord speaks of the great and mighty things, announcing first the overthrow of Jerusalem. The demolished houses of Jerusalem are coming to be used in the defense to serve against the mounds and the sword. There will be great slaughter. (The Hebrew text of verses 4 and 5 has many difficulties.)

Verses 6-14. The next great and mighty things revealed are the future blessings and glory. Health and cure, abundance of peace and truth, a complete return from the captivity of both Judah and Israel, cleansing from all their iniquity, complete forgiveness, all are promised; and let it be remembered none of these promises has been realized. Verses 9-13 also concern the future restoration of the land and the city. What a day is yet to come when "the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of Hosts" is heard, when Zion sings her beautiful redemption songs. "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah." The delay may be long and still deferred according to His eternal purposes; but at the appointed time these days will surely come.

Verses 15-18. "In those days" in the coming days, the days of blessing and glory, when Christ comes the second time, He, the Branch of Righteousness will occupy the throne of His father David. (See Luke 1:32.) Then salvation for His people will have come, and the city will receive a new name, the name of Him whose glory covers it, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Likewise will the temple worship be restored. (See annotations on Ezekiel's millennial temple.)

Verses 19-26. This is similar to 31:35, etc. His gifts and calling are without repentance. The Davidic covenant stands. He does not cast away His people.

CHAPTER 34:1-7 Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah

The besieging army was before the walls of Jerusalem when the prophet is commanded to go to the king and tell him that the city will soon be burned. He announced also Zedekiah's fate. He could not escape, but would be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. He would see Nebuchadnezzar eye to eye, speak with him mouth to mouth, and then be taken to Babylon. Ezekiel said he should not see Babylon (Ezek. 12:13). Both statements are true. He saw the king as a prisoner at Riblah and there his eyes were put out (2 Kings 25:6, 7), and then he was taken away to Babylon. Yet he was not to die by the sword, but in peace. And Jeremiah discharged faithfully his message.

CHAPTER 34:8-22 The Message of Condemnation

The king had made a covenant that all Hebrew slaves should be released (Exodus 21:1-6; Deut. 15:12-18). The princes and people agreed, but afterwards broke the covenant. The message of condemnation tells them, since they had done this, that the Lord will set them free to fall a prey to the sword, the pestilence and famine. The text explains itself.

CHAPTER 35 The Faithful Rechabites and the Unfaithful Jews

1. The command concerning the Rechabites (35:1-11)

2. The lesson for the Jews (35:12-19)

The Rechabites were Kenites and were numbered with the children of Israel (1 Chron. 2:55). During the reign of Jehoiakim the incident of this chapter happened. The critics may rave against the "unchronological" construction of Jeremiah jumping from one period into another, but there we see the guiding hand of the Spirit in the arrangement of these events. It is perfectly in order that this should come next to the chapter which relates the broken covenant. A careful reading and study of this chapter will bring out the lesson of their faithfulness to their father's command, and the unfaithfulness of the Jews to God's command.

CHAPTER 36 The Indestructibility of the Word of God

1. The writing of the roll (36:1-4)

2. The reading of the roll (36:4-20)

3. The king cuts and burns the roll (36:21-26)

4. The indestructibility of the Word of God (36:27-32)

Verses 1-4. Once more we are taken back to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is now commanded to commit all the words Jehovah had spoken to him to writing. It was for the purpose that the people might hear of all the evil and that they might yet consider it and turn to the Lord to be forgiven. How gracious and merciful He is! He then dictated all the words to Baruch, who wrote them down. But, asks a critic, how could he remember all he had spoken? The same Spirit who communicated the messages to him, re-communicated them to the prophet.

Verses 4-20. Jeremiah was "shut in," which, however, does not mean that he was a prisoner (see verse 19); it probably means that he was not permitted to enter the LORD's house on account of some ceremonial impurity. So he sent Baruch, his amanuensis, to read the scroll to the people on the fasting day, and when all the people had come together, Baruch read the roll at the entry of the new gate. Michaiah, one of the sons of Gemariah, was deeply moved by what he had heard, went to the place where the princes sat in counsel and told them what he had heard from Baruch's lips. Baruch was then commanded to appear before the princes to read the roll to them. What they heard frightened them. They declared they would tell the king.

Verses 21-16. The king sent for the roll. The king listened to but a few of the leaves. Then, energized by the devil, he pulled out his penknife, cut the roll, and, to make sure that the roll would be destroyed, he cast it into the open fire, and with keen satisfaction he watched till the roll was consumed. Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to keep him from doing this evil deed, but he refused to listen to them. These three had at least some reverence for the Word of God, and therefore the Holy Spirit records their names. The king was not satisfied with this. His satanic anger was so aroused that he wanted to have Baruch and Jeremiah apprehended. Like the mad king Saul, he probably thought of killing them both. But the Lord hid them.

What Jehoiakim did, has been done over and over again. It is being done today as never before in the history of Christendom. It is being done by the destructive critics, in colleges and universities; it is done by the men who have produced the Shorter New Testament and the Shorter Old Testament, by those who advocate an abridged Bible, by others who, like the English writer Wells, want a new Bible. The same power of darkness is behind all these wicked attempts to mutilate the Word of God. Jehoiakim's work is nothing in comparison with these twentieth century infidels, because these aim at the most precious, the most blessed revelation of God, the doctrine of Christ.

Their condemnation will be far greater than that of the Jewish king.

Verses 27-32. But did the king destroy the Word of God? One might just as well speak of destroying God Himself. Neither God nor His Word can ever be affected by the efforts of men inspired by the enemy of the truth of God. The Word of God endureth forever. It is, like God, eternal. How the Bibles have been burned a thousand times over again! In pagan Rome and papal Rome Satan has raged against the Bible. His Word lives on. And now the devil, camouflaged as an angel of light, in the guise of "devout scholarship" and "reverent criticism" tries it again. His Word lives on! Emperors and popes, philosophers and infidels who attacked the Bible are gone; the Bible is still with us. Jeremiah is told to take another roll. Once more the Lord dictates the same words to him, and Jeremiah again dictates them to Baruch, "with many like words," including a judgment message of the miserable end of the wicked king.

Jeremiah and Zedekiah and the Fall of Jerusalem (37-39)

CHAPTER 37

1. Jeremiah's warning (37:1-10)

2. Jeremiah's arrest (37:11-21)

Verses 1-10. To understand more fully these chapters it must be remembered that the besieging army before the gates of Jerusalem was temporarily withdrawn, because an Egyptian army had appeared against it. This was no doubt an occasion for the false prophets to preach their false hope, so that the people were deceived. Once more Zedekiah sent to the prophet a deputation (21:1) after Nebuchadnezzar had made him king. The occasion was on account of the withdrawal of the Chaldean army (verse 5). They thought that it was surely a good sign and expected a favorable message. The false hope with which they were deceiving themselves was swept away by the word of Jehovah as it came to the prophet (verses 7-10). There was no hope and after Zedekiah had rebelled (see our annotations on 2 Kings 24-25), the king of Babylon came and burnt the city with fire.

Verses 11-21. When the Chaldean army had left, Jeremiah went forth to go to his hometown Anathoth, for what is not revealed. He may have gone to claim his portion which belonged to him as priest. When, in the gate of Benjamin a captain arrested him, charging the prophet with desertion, he denied the charge. Such a charge could easily be made on account of Jeremiah's former exhortation to submit to the Chaldeans. He is put in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe; but later the dungeon is changed to the court of the prison. (See the annotations to 32:2.)

We give a diagram which illustrates the chronology of the siege of Jerusalem and the fall of the city.

I. The Siege begun in the ninth year

39:1.....Siege begun
34:10..... Manumission of slaves

II. The Siege raised temporarily in the ninth or tenth year

37:3-10=====21:1-7.....Jeremiah consulted by deputies from the king.
34:8-22 Re-enthralment of slaves.
37:11-16..... Jeremiah seized, and imprisoned in Jonathan's house.

III. The Siege renewed in the ninth or tenth year

37:17-21===32:1-5..... Jeremiah brought in tenth year to be secretly consulted by the king; put afterwards in court of guard.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| =34:1-7.....: | |
| 32:6-44..... | Field bought by Jeremiah. |
| 33:1-26..... | Further prophecy in court of guard. |
| 38:1-3=====21:8-10..... | Jeremiah advises people to desert to Chaldeans. |
| 38:4-6..... | Jeremiah put in miry dungeon. |
| 38:7-13..... | Jeremiah restored by Ebed-melech to court of guard. |
| 38:14-28..... | Jeremiah consulted by king in third entry of Temple: remanded to court of guard. |

IV. The Siege ended in the eleventh year

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 39:1-14..... | City taken and destroyed. |
|--------------|---------------------------|

| I. The Siege begun in the ninth year. | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------|--|
| xxxix:1 | xxxiv:10 | | Siege begun. Manumission of slaves |
| II. The Siege raised temporarily in the ninth or tenth year. | | | |
| xxxvii:3-10 = | | = xxi:1-7 | Jeremiah consulted by deputies from the king. |
| xxxvii:11-16 | xxxiv:8-22 | | Re-enthralment of slaves. Jeremiah seized, and imprisoned in Jonathan' house. |
| III. The Siege renewed in the ninth or tenth year. | | | |
| xxxvii:17-21 | = xxxii:1-5 } = xxxiv:1-7 } | | Jeremiah brought in tenth year to be secretly consulted by the king: put afterwards in court of guard. |
| | xxxii:6-44 xxxiii:1-26 | | Field bought by Jeremiah. Further prophecy in court of guard. |
| xxxviii:1-3 = | | = xxi:8-10 | Jeremiah advises people to desert to Chaldeans. |
| xxxviii:4-6 | | | Jeremiah put in miry dungeon. |
| xxxviii:7-13 | | | Jeremiah restored by Ebed-melech to court of guard. |
| xxxviii:14-28 | | | Jeremiah consulted by king in third entry of Temple: remanded to court of guard. |
| IV. The Siege ended in the eleventh year. | | | |
| xxxix:1-14 | | | City taken and destroyed. |

CHAPTER 38

1. Jeremiah in the dungeon and his rescue (38:1-13)

2. Jeremiah with Zedekiah: His last appeal (38:14-28)

Verses 1-13. Jeremiah is next accused of high treason. The charge is based on his message, given to him by the Lord: "He that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live." Like the conscientious objectors during the past war, they accused him of being unpatriotic. "This man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." They demand his life. In the sixth verse we see him in a deep dungeon, into which he was put by means of ropes. And Jeremiah sank into the vile mire. This reminds us of Him, our blessed Lord, who was also accused by false witnesses, and who went Himself into the horrible pit and the miry clay, into the deepest suffering and the jaws of death, to take us out of the dungeon, where sin has put us. The wicked princes evidently meant to leave Jeremiah in that dungeon to suffer a horrible death.

But the servant of the Lord was not in the hands of the princes, but in the hands of his Master. God chooses for the deliverer a slave, an Ethiopian, Ebed-melech (servant of the king). The heart of this Ethiopian eunuch was touched with pity. He goes to the king, who seems to have been ignorant about what had been done to Jeremiah and tells him that Jeremiah is likely to starve to death in the filthy hole where they had put him. The king commands the eunuch to act at once with thirty men to deliver Jeremiah. With what tenderness, to spare the man of God all needless pain, Ebed-melech carried out the king's wish (verse 12)!

Verses 14-28. This is a great dramatic scene. Zedekiah sends once more for Jeremiah. We suppose the filth of the dungeon was still clinging to the prophet's garments. The king wants to know something. "Hide nothing from me," he demands. He may rest assured that the prophet of holy courage hides nothing. But Jeremiah asks two questions: "Wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" The first question the king answers: "I will not put thee to death." The second question he leaves unanswered. His heart was hardened like Pharaoh's heart.

He gives him once more the message of Jehovah: Go forth to the king of Babylon, acknowledge his authority, believe in My Word and thou shalt live and thine house; then Jerusalem will not be burned. But if not, then you cannot escape and the doom of the city is sealed. The king shrinks from such a surrender. Terrors of an imaginary kind seize hold on him. He fears the Babylonian king will deliver him into the hands of the Jews who had deserted already, and that they would mock him and ill-treat him. Jeremiah pleads once more. It is his final appeal: "Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD." But the king refuses. The final request he made of Jeremiah but reveals his miserable character. The last interview has ended. Jeremiah remains in the prison and was there when Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER 39

1. The fall of Jerusalem and the fate of Zedekiah (39:1-9)

2. Nebuchadnezzar's kindness to Jeremiah (39:10-14)

3. Ebed-melech's reward (39:15-18)

Verses 1-9. The Word of God comes true; the prophecy of Jeremiah is vindicated! The mighty army of Nebuchadnezzar returned to the city; for many months the siege goes on under indescribable suffering. How horrible it must have been! Then the city fell and the victors rushed in; the work of slaughter and burning began. According to Jewish tradition it was on the ninth day of the month Ab. On the same date in the year 70 of our era, the city was destroyed again and the temple burned, announced some forty years before by one greater than Jeremiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever since, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles and is so still. The prophetic Word tells us of a final great tribulation which will sweep over the land, and the restored, unbelieving nation, and once more armies will gather before the city.

Zedekiah tried to escape with his men of war, but is captured. Cruelly his boys are slaughtered in his sight--the last thing his eyes beheld, for immediately after his eyes were put out. Bound with chains he is led to Babylon. All the houses of Jerusalem go up in flames; the walls are demolished and the remnant of the people are carried away prisoners (52:4-16). The poorest are permitted to remain and were treated mercifully. God remembers the poor and they are spared. For all we know, these poor people, who had nothing, were the godly, those who wept over the conditions and who cried to God for help. Their prayer, the prayer of the needy, was answered.

Verses 10-14. And if the poor were remembered, the prophet was likewise treated with great kindness. The Babylonian king commanded: "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Nebuzar-adan found the great man of God in the prison. The princes had to come and take him from the prison house of humiliation. What an exaltation! He dwelt among the people. He cast his lot with the poor, who had nothing. We doubt not Nebuchadnezzar knew much of the history we have followed, that which transpired in Jerusalem during the siege. Perhaps he even knew the great messages concerning himself. But it was the Lord who made him act as he did. His loving eye was open above His servant, who had served so faithfully.

Verses 15-18. And now the deliverer of Jeremiah, the Ethiopian eunuch, receives his reward. This message was previously given before the city fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeremiah was still in prison. It is put here into this place for a very definite purpose, which once more answers the puerile charges of the critics.

It is when judgment comes that the faithful are rewarded. This is the lesson. While the ungodly fell and were carried away, the poor remained and were spared; Jeremiah is well treated, and Ebed-melech receives his reward. So will it be when the Lord comes.

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (40-45)

CHAPTERS 40-41 The Treachery in the Land and the Flight to Egypt

1. Jeremiah's choice (40:1-6)
2. Gedaliah and Ishmael's deed (40:7-41:3)
3. Ishmael's further atrocities and retreat (41:4-18)

Verses 1-6. The opening paragraph of this chapter tells us of the choice which was given to Jeremiah. He was loosed from the prisoner's chains and told by the captain of the guard "If it seems good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come and I will look well unto thee, but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear; behold all the land is before thee, whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go." Jeremiah decided to stay with his people in the land.

Verses 40:7-41:3. The history of this section is as follows: Gedaliah had been made governor by the victorious king. When the captains heard it they came to him at Mizpah and Gedaliah exhorted them to loyalty to the Chaldeans. Then Gedaliah is warned that Baalis, the King of Ammon, has sent Ishmael to assassinate him, but Gedaliah refuses to believe the report. Then Johanan declares himself ready to kill Ishmael, so that the dreadful results of the murder of the governor Gedaliah might be averted. Gedaliah thinks it is all slander and forbids it. In the seventh month Ishmael, with ten men, who are being entertained by Gedaliah, murders him and all the Jews and Chaldeans, who are present. It is a horrible story.

Verses 41:4-18. The next day Ishmael met eighty men who came from the north; he invited them to come to Gedaliah, who was dead in his house. When they came to the place he slew them, except ten men, who offered to reveal to him hidden treasures of food. Then he carried off all the

rest of the people who were left in Mizpah, to go to the land of Ammon. When Johanan and the captains heard of what Ishmael had done, they pursued him unto Gibeon, but Ishmael with eight men escaped to the Ammonites. Johanan took those whom they had rescued out of the clutches of the monster Ishmael, and, fearing the Chaldeans, purposed to go to Egypt.

CHAPTER 42

1. Jeremiah the intercessor (42:1-6)
2. The answer from Jehovah (42:7-22)

Verses 1-6. The remnant, the few who were left after the terrible happenings recorded in the preceding chapter were now cast upon the Lord and besought the prophet to pray for them: "That the LORD thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." They believed in Jeremiah as a man of God. He promises to do so, and when the answer comes he will not keep back anything.

Verses 7-22. The answer came ten days later. Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. If he had spoken of himself, sat down and thought out by himself what they were to do now he would have waited ten days. But it was not his counsel, not his opinion or advice; the Lord's answer to the divine counsel is that they should abide in the land and that the king of Babylon would not hinder them in any way. Then the Lord would plant them and build them up. The Lord promises them mercies and salvation. But if they went down to Egypt, the Lord's anger would be upon them and judgment would overtake them.

In their hearts they had a desire to go to Egypt. He who is the searcher of hearts knew all about it. They used deceit, and now the Lord, knowing that they would not obey, announced through the prophet that they should die by the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

CHAPTER 43

1. The rebellion against Jeremiah (43:1-7)
2. Jeremiah's prediction about the conquest of Egypt (43:8-13)

Verses 1- 7. No sooner had Jeremiah finished communicating the divine answer, but the captains and the proud men denounced him. They charged him that he spoke falsely, that all he had said was at the instigation of Baruch, that both were traitors. Then the leaders did not obey the voice of the Lord to dwell in the land; they took the remnant of Judah (verse 5 is explained by 40:11-12) all the people, including Jeremiah and Baruch, to lead them down to Egypt, and finally they settled in Tahpanhes (Daphne), which was in the northeastern part, on the road out of Egypt to Palestine.

Verses 8-13. Then Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord to take great stones and bury them at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, so that all the men of Judah could be witnesses of it. In 1886 the Egyptologist, Professor Petrie, excavated at Tahpanhes a brick pavement before a kind of a palace, which probably was the place where Jeremiah hid the stones. The ruin was Kasr el BintJehudi, which means, "the palace of the daughter of Judah," the place evidently assigned to the daughters of Zedekiah. (See verse 6.) The word brick-kiln means a pavement of bricks. Then, after having buried the stones, he announced that Nebuchadnezzar would come and set his throne there also, that he would conquer Egypt, smite it and burn the idol temples there. Such an invasion took place about 568 B.C., when the Egyptian King Amasis was defeated. The pillars mentioned in verse 13 are obelisks, and Beth-Shemesh means "the house of the Sun" (Heliopolis or On).

CHAPTER 44

1. The message to the Jews (44:1-10)
2. Their punishment (44:11-14)
3. Worshipping the queen of heaven (44:15-19)
4. Jehovah's answer (44:20-28)
5. The sign: Pharaoh-Hophra's Defeat (44:29-30)

Verses 1-10. The message is concerning all the Jews who were now dwelling in Egypt. Besides being in Tahpanhes, they were also in Noph (Memphis) and in Pathros, which was in the upper Egypt. Not long ago ancient papyri in Aramaic were discovered which show that there was a Jewish colony in that part of Egypt. Jeremiah reminds them in his message how God had dealt with Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatries, though He had sent prophets to warn them. And now they were doing the same thing in Egypt. "You too bring now utter ruin upon yourselves and all your own."

Verses 11-14. This announces their coming punishment. "Behold I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Israel." They are to be punished as Jerusalem was.

Verses 15-19. What heart-hardness to say to the man of God, "We will not hearken." They intended to perform their vows to worship "the queen of Heaven." All they said was, it was well with us when we worshipped the queen of Heaven in the homeland. The women seem to have been concerned mostly in this, but they did so with the knowledge and the consent of their husbands. See about the queen of Heaven and the worship, chapter 7 and the annotations there. They claimed that all the disaster which had come on them was the result of abandoning their evil practices. What defiance and wickedness, the fruit of their unbelieving hearts! Still greater is the defiance and wickedness of today, when the cross and the gospel of Christ are deliberately rejected.

Verses 20-28. The answer is plain enough, and they heard what their fate would be for their deliberate unbelief and disobedience. These are solemn words, and the Lord said, "They shall know whose Word shall stand, Mine or theirs." God's Word will always stand, and so will those who stand by the Word of God and put their trust in it.

Verses 29-30. He gives them a sign that such will be the case. Hophra is to be given into the hands of his enemies. This happened a few years before Nebuchadrezzar defeated Amasis, who had succeeded Hophra.

CHAPTER 45

This is the shortest chapter and contains a special message to Baruch, the companion and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. It must be noticed that this did not take place in Egypt, where now the prophet and his friend sojourned, but it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Baruch had just finished writing the words which Jeremiah dictated. It was no doubt a strenuous task, and when Baruch laid down his pen, the work having been finished, the Lord sent him a special message, showing that He had not forgotten the faithful scribe. He, too, was deeply exercised over the existing conditions; he shared the grief and sorrow of the prophet. But there must have been a measure of disappointment in Baruch's heart. Had he expected some special recognition? Was he seeking something for himself, expecting great things? Had he planned and was he lifted up with some high ambition? It would seem that such was the case, for He who knows the thoughts of His creatures from afar said to him: "And seeketh thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." It is the very heart of the old nature to seek great things, to be ambitious for earthly possessions and honors, to please oneself. God's people need to watch against this more than against anything

else. It is the very crime of the devil, pride (1 Tim. 3:6). Every high ambition must be dethroned; the only ambition worthy of a child of God is to please Him, who lived on earth, never pleasing Himself, who made of Himself no reputation. How it ought to ring in our hearts daily: "Seeketh thou great things? Seek them not." Seek not recognition in this poor age; wait for His day. And Baruch is assured of God's protection and care.

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS

CHAPTER 46 Concerning Egypt

1. Prophecy about Pharaoh-Necho (46:1-12)
2. Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt (46:13-26)
3. A message of comfort (46:27-28)

Verses 1-12. This Pharaoh made an attempt to invade the territory of the king of Babylon, but was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in a battle on the river Euphrates at Carchemish. This prophecy was given about eighteen years before the fall of Jerusalem. All was literally fulfilled.

Verses 13-26. This was given after the fall of Jerusalem, when the remnant had gone to Egypt. (See chapters 43 and 44.) This also was fulfilled. Verse 26 promises a future restoration of Egypt. Compare this with Isaiah's prophecy (19:19-25).

Verses 27-28. This blessed message of comfort also awaits its final great fulfillment in the coming days of promised blessing for Jacob's seed.

CHAPTER 47 Concerning the Philistines

This brief chapter is concerning the inhabitants of the borderland of Canaan, called Philistia. This announced judgment was fulfilled a short time after it was spoken by the prophet.

CHAPTER 48 Concerning Moab

1. The overthrow of Moab (48:1-10)
2. The humiliation of Moab (48:11-19)
3. Reaping what they sowed (48:20-28)
4. Destroyed on account of its pride (48:29-47)

With these divisions the chapter may be studied in detail. Moab was of incestuous off spring (Gen. 19:37). Israel is now exhorted to flee and save itself because Moab is to be destroyed. Moab's national deity was Chemosh, who was also worshipped by the sister nation, the Ammonites. Chemosh was probably the same as Molech. He is now to go forth into captivity with his priests and princes. On verse 10 critics say: "This bloodthirsty verse is surely not Jeremiah's." But they forget that the whole prophecy is introduced with, "Thus saith the LORD," and the critic's knife, which cuts out certain verses from this chapter, mutilates the Word of God. There is no valid reason to brand this and other verses as the work of some supplanter.

The chief places of Moab are mentioned. "The horn of Moab (horn the emblem of power) is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the LORD." And why this judgment? "For he has magnified himself against the LORD." They were filled with pride, yea, they were exceedingly proud. The Lord speaks of it thus: "His loftiness and his arrogancy and his pride and his haughtiness of heart." How God detests pride! In both Testaments it is marked out as the great abomination in the sight of God.

Filled with pride and haughtiness, they derided Israel, God's people; whenever Israel was mentioned "they skipped for joy" (verse 27). Of verses 28 and 29, critics declare that they are mostly derived from Isaiah 15 and 16. These two chapters contain a similar prophecy about Moab, but these utterances by Jeremiah are not copied from Isaiah, but are a divine repetition of the coming judgment of that people. "Woe be unto thee Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth! for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captive." This is the final word in this predicted judgment of Moab. And thus Moab was broken.

The last verse speaks of a territorial restoration of Moab, not of a restitution of that wicked generation, as some teach. We do not know where a remnant of Moab is today, to possess in millennial times their former land; nor do we know how the Lord is going to accomplish it. But we know He will fulfill His own Word and we do not need to invent some scheme of how it will be done.

CHAPTER 49 Concerning Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, and Elam

1. Concerning the Ammonites (49:1-6)
2. Concerning Edom (49:7-22)
3. Concerning Damascus (49:23-27)
4. Concerning Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)
5. Against Elam (49:34-39)

Ammon was the younger brother of Moab, and, like the Moabites, the Ammonites were a wicked people, though they had no cities like Moab, but were restless wanderers; they were also the enemies of Israel. The predicted judgment has come. Where is Ammon today? In what tribe or nation is a remnant preserved? Only the Omniscient One knows. But their captivity, like that of Moab, will be brought back again in the days when Israel becomes the head of the nations.

Edom, springing from Esau, was the most outspoken enemy of Israel. In our annotations on the prophecy of Obadiah we return to this chapter. Their complete judgment is here announced. "For, lo, I will make thee small among the nations and despised among men. Thy terribleness has deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD" (49:15-16). Here at least the critics concede that this is a true description of the dwelling places of Edom of old. "Its capital, Petra, lay in an amphitheater of mountains, accessible only through a narrow gorge, called the Sik, winding in with precipitous sides from the west; and the mountain sides round Petra, and the ravines about it, contain innumerable rock-hewn cavities, some being tombs, but others dwellings in which the ancient inhabitants lived" (Canon Driver). No restoration for Edom is promised.

Damascus's anguish and sorrow is predicted next, followed by a prophecy concerning various Arabian tribes; Kedar and Hazor are to be smitten.

The final prediction is as to Elam. Elam was east of South Babylonia and the lower Tigris, later known as Susians. This prophecy was given at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. Elam became an ally of the Persian kingdom. Here her overthrow is foretold as well as her restoration "in the latter days."

CHAPTERS 50-51 Babylon

These two final chapters contain a great prophecy concerning Babylon, her overthrow and doom. The fifty-first chapter closes with the statement "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." There is

a direct statement that Jeremiah wrote all these words. We find it at the close of chapter 51:59-64. "Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon." It would be a brazen infidelity which says Jeremiah did not write all these words. Yet the almost universally accepted view of the critics is that these chapters cannot be the work of Jeremiah. The German infidel, Professor Eichhorn, the man who coined the phrase "higher criticism," started this denial; Kuenen, Budde and others have followed in his steps. Others have modified this radical view and concede the possibility that Jeremiah may have been the author of these two chapters. No believer in the Word of God can have a moment's doubt as to this question.

An analysis of these two chapters would be difficult to make. We therefore point out some of the leading parts of this great utterance. The prophecy covers both the doom of Babylon as it has been and the doom of another, the mystical Babylon, so prominent in the last book of the Bible, in which also two chapters are devoted to Babylon. Some hold that the literal Babylon is meant in Revelation; that the city in Mesopotamia must be rebuilt; that it will finally become the one great world center domineering the religious, commercial and political affairs of all the world, and that when this has taken place Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled. A careful examination of this theory will show that it is untenable. It would mean that all the great world-centers of today must be wiped out first, and London, New York, and others would have to yield their supremacy to the restored Babylon. The chapters in Revelation show

us clearly that a Babylon of a mystical nature is meant, which in spirit, in worldly glory and corruption corresponds to the ancient Babylon. This mystical Babylon is Rome. This has been the interpretation of the chapters of Revelation from the earliest times and is still maintained, with a few exceptions, by all sound and spiritual expositors of the Word of God.

The message begins with the command to publish among the nations the conquest of Babylon, that Bel (lord) is put to shame and that Merodach (the chief god of Babylon, known as Marduk in Babylonian inscriptions) is dismayed. The gods of Babylon are put to confusion on account of the fall of the city. The disaster comes from the north (Medo Persia, the conqueror of Babylon; Daniel 7). Verses 4-7 predict the return of the nation thoroughly penitent. That the return of a small remnant after the defeat of Babylon does not exhaust this prophecy is obvious. The return promised here comes in the day when the times of the Gentiles are over, when Babylon and the Babylon spirit will pass away, when all false gods fall and the Lord is exalted in that day. Then the lost sheep of Israel will be found and gathered again.

The invasion under Cyrus is described in verses 9-10. The fall of the Babylon in Revelation is not brought about by an invasion such as is described here, but by the ten horns of the beast, the revived Roman empire (Rev. 17:16; Dan. 7).

Verse 13 announces the complete overthrow of the city, to become the hindermost of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land and a desert. This ruin was not at once carried out, but gradually ancient Babylon became all that. The ruins of this once powerful city have been located north of Hilla, a town of about 25,000 inhabitants. Koldewey, of the German Orient Society, laid bare by excavation many of the ruins, showing that the city covered twelve square miles; great streets and canals, and the ruins of the Marduk temple have been found. These ruins can never be rebuilt (Isa. 47). There is nothing which indicates that this once glorious city is to have a revival and then be destroyed once more and remain a wilderness after its destruction at some future time.

In her fall Babylon only reaped what she had sown. "For it is the vengeance of the LORD; take vengeance upon her; as she hath, do unto her" (verse 15). The same verdict is pronounced upon the Babylon of the end time, when Rome will once more have supremacy, when the present day Babylon-spirit will concentrate in a great world federation. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double" (Rev. 18:6). The nations will then drink of the cup of God's wrath and judgment as the literal Babylon did. Coupled with these judgment predictions are the future blessings of Israel. When the

Lord overthrows the final Babylon, as seen in the book of Revelation, when the great whore is judged and her seat, Rome, in Italy, goes up in smoke, then Israel's day of glory and blessing breaks. "In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant" (50:20; see chapter 31:34; Micah 7:18, and Romans 11:25-28). After still more predictions concerning the fall and doom of Babylon (verses 21-32), we find another prophecy of comfort. When the times of the Gentiles end with the complete dethronement of Babylon in its mystical meaning as pictured in Revelation, the Redeemer of Israel will arise to plead the cause of His people Israel. The fiftieth chapter ends with an additional description of the desolation of Babylon.

The fifty-first chapter is a continued prophecy of the doom and utter desolation of the proud mistress of the nations. Much here connects with Rev. 18. The remnant of Israel is addressed in verses 5 and 6. Compare with Rev. 18:4. It is the same command to flee Babylon, a principle which is in force today as regards the true church and her separation from ecclesiastical evil. The golden cup mentioned in verse 7 is also mentioned in Revelation in chapter 17:4, in the description of papal Rome and her evil abominations. In the rest of the chapter God's dealing in judgment is wonderfully told out, prophetic of that coming day when the Lord will deal with the world in judgment. This must be the reason why such an extended prophecy is given. It all goes beyond the judgment of the literal Babylon. We call attention to the last verses of this long chapter. We read there that the prophet, after he wrote down all these words against Babylon, gave the book to Seraiah, chief chamberlain of Zedekiah. This was before the fall of Jerusalem. Seraiah was evidently the brother of Baruch (32:12). While Jeremiah knew the significant position that Babylonia, and especially King Nebuchadnezzar, had been given by the sovereign Lord, on account of which he urged submission to the Chaldeans; he also knew even then, before Jerusalem fell, of Babylon's fall and doom. Seraiah went to Babylon and he was to read the roll there, probably not in public, but in private. After reading, he was to speak certain words (verse 62), then bind a stone to the roll and cast it into the Euphrates. When the roll was sinking he was to say, "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise again." In our New Testament book of prophecy we read: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more" (Rev. 18:21). That great predicted end of all God-defiance and opposition, typified by Babylon and its past glory, will surely come. Jeremiah uttered his last word.

The last chapter of Jeremiah is not from his pen; some other inspired writer was moved by the Holy Spirit to add the history of the capture of Jerusalem and the fate of the people.

The substance of this appendix is found in 2 Kings 24:18-20 and 25:1-21, 27-30. The reader will find in the second book of Kings our annotations on this history. But why is it added here once more? Evidently to show how literally the judgment predictions and divine warnings given through Jeremiah were fulfilled. For a time the false prophets had their way; their lying messages, their words of delusion and false hope were listened to and believed. The lot of the prophet of God was a lonely lot; he was rejected and he suffered. Yea, often the weeping prophet was discouraged and filled with gloom. But the time came when he was vindicated and God's Word was vindicated, while the false prophets were found out to be liars and deceivers.

In our own day we have the false prophets still with us, men and women, who deny the truth and teach error. They speak of world improvement, world betterment, and world conquest. What God has spoken concerning "wrath and judgment to come" is set aside. Those who preach and teach according to the infallible Word of God, who see no better world, no universal righteousness and peace, are branded as pessimists. The "day of the LORD" and the "coming of the Lord" are sneered at. But as the Word of God spoken by Jeremiah was vindicated, so the Word of God will be vindicated again, till all the enemies of the written Word, the Bible, and the living Word, Christ, are silenced forever.

