

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 41 –March 13-19

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalm 119

Mark 13-16

Readings in Class:

Jeremiah 8-20

Introduction to Jeremiah

Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible. He is active from around 626 to 586 BC. The book was actually written by Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, as dictated by Jeremiah. We learn more of Jeremiah's personal history and sufferings than any other prophet.

As is typical with the prophets, Jeremiah's message to the people is a call to repentance and warning of the judgement to come for breaking the covenant. Part of Jeremiah's ministry fell between the two waves of deportation done by the Babylonians, leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah was called to usher God's people into exile. His ministry starts under faithful King Josiah and ends with him sitting in a pit as the city is destroyed under King Zedekiah.

A brief summary of Jeremiah

- Jeremiah's Call (1)
- Warnings and Exhortations to Judah (2-35)
 - Early Discourses (2-6)
 - Temple Message (7-10)
 - Covenant and conspiracy (11-13)
 - Messages concerning the Drought (14-15)
 - Day of Disaster (16-17)
 - Keeping the Sabbath Holy (17)
 - The Potter (18-20)
 - Judgements (21-24)
 - Foretelling the Babylonian Exile (25-29)
 - Promise of a new covenant (30-33)
 - Historical Appendix (34-35)

- Jeremiah suffers (36-38)
- The fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath (39-45)
- Judgement against the nations (46-51)
- Historical appendix (52)

A New Covenant

While a lot of Jeremiah is preaching destruction to the people of Judah, there is a glimmer of hope. Chapters 30-33 is sometimes referred to as the little book of joy. The people will be brought back from exile and the nations that oppressed them will themselves be destroyed. It is also here that we get some of the clearest promises of Jesus. In chapter 31 we get the well known passage “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah....” The language of “the new covenant” (or testimony) can be found when Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper. “This cup is a new testament in my blood” (see Luke 22 and 1 Corinthians 11). The new covenant is not like the old, which the people broke. The new covenant is sealed in Christ’s blood for the forgiveness of sins. It will be written on people’s hearts.

True vs Deceptive Words

A big part of Jeremiah’s struggle is with false prophets. He warns the people several times to not listen to those who prophesy peace when there is no peace. Who “prophesy delusions of their own minds” (23:26). The false prophets, among them Hananiah (ch 28) prophesied that God would destroy the Babylonians and the exiles would return within two years. Instead, Jeremiah tells those already in exile (which would include Daniel), to settle down, have children, and pray that the land they have been brought to prospers (ch 29). Jeremiah, of course, is correct and the Babylonians eventually destroy Jerusalem and the Israelites don’t return to their land for several decades.