

Lesson 02: Jeremiah & Lamentations

GROW University - Old Testament 103

JEREMIAH

Context

Historical:^{1 2}

Redemptive-historical:³

Theme:

The old covenant has failed; not because it itself was defunct, but because the people were not able to keep it due to their sinful hearts. Therefore a new covenant is needed which will involve new hearts for the people of God.

Outline W/ Pivotal Texts:

- I. Jeremiah 1-45 — Yahweh and His people
 - A. Ch. 1-29 — The proclamation against Judah (with hope at the end in Chapter 29)
 - B. Ch. 30-33 — The promise of a New Covenant (theological core of the book)
 - C. Ch. 34-45 — The final destruction of Jerusalem
- II. Jeremiah 46-52 — Yahweh and the Nations

¹ Homework — Historical Context: Read 2 Kings 22-25; 2 Chronicles 34-36.

² Three recommended Old Testament reference books:

- *The New Bible Dictionary* edited by Marshall, Millard, Packer, and Wiseman (published by IVP),
- *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* edited by Alexander, Rosner, Carson, and Goldsworthy (also published by IVP), and
- *An Introduction to the Old Testament* by Dillard and Longman (Zondervan). And
- (secret #4) *The Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines* [sic] (by Rose Publishing). *These are great reference books for these sorts of historical and biblical-theological issues.*

³ Homework — Redemptive Historical Context: Deuteronomy 27, 28

Theme Texts:

Jeremiah 11:1-7

*11:1-6— Yahweh lays the covenant out before the people.

Yahweh says that they've broken it in two specific ways:

- 1.) by not listening to Yahweh (vv 6-8)
- 2.) by turning to other gods (vv 9-10).

11:11-17— Finally Yahweh pronounces His judgment against the people.

This is a really good microcosm of the first 28 chapters of Jeremiah.

Read **11:1-5**

Read **11:6-8**

- 11:7— For hundreds of years **Yahweh has sent prophet after prophet** to them, again and again, to try and bring them back to obedience to the covenant.
- 11:8— Yahweh accuses them of having not listened to these repeated attempts to reach them.
- That is a constant theme in Jeremiah:
 - *Yahweh reaching out by sending His word, and the people refusing to listen.*

Read **11:13**. Jeremiah says the same things about his own ministry in **25:3-4**

Instead, they've listened to the untruths and lying words of **false prophets**. Jeremiah is big on exposing them.

Read **6:14**

Read **7:8**

- 11:8— everyone followed their own evil **hearts**.

Read **11:9-13**.

- 11:11— Disaster is coming upon them. (Big Theme: The wrath of Yahweh because of idolatry)

- Why is idolatry (the worship of false gods) is such a major ordeal to Yahweh?
 - Read **5:7...**
 - Even though these gods are not real, the true worship of them has resulted in other greatly immoral acts.
 - 5:9— Yahweh says He must avenge *Himself*?
 - 5:12— Yahweh says that they are *lying about Him*?
 - Yahweh's name and glory are being defamed.
 - 11:11— Yahweh says also that He will not listen to them when they call upon Him. If people won't listen to *Him*, neither will *He* listen to *them*!
 - 11:12— When calamity comes, these gods that the people have been trusting in will **not be able to save**.
 - Read **4:30**: This doctrine that idolatry kills is actually not exclusive to Jeremiah. It's all over the Old Testament.⁴
 - Read **11:17**.

Jeremiah 27:5-7

Read **27:5-7**. Wow!

Total Depravity

Why was the covenant broken?

Read **6:10**. They cannot hear the word of Yahweh because they have no desire to.

Read **17:1**— Why is this lack of both ability and desire?

Read **17:9**

⁴ Psalm 115:3-8; Isaiah 1:29-31; 44:9-20; Habakkuk 2:18-19; Jeremiah 2:5

Read **18:12**— The people are led by these evil hearts.

Read **13:23**— Not only does the entrenched sin of a man's heart cripple, limit, and control him, but it also won't release Him.

Recap: The human heart is rendered incapable of hearing God's word, restricted in its desires, emotions, and feelings because sin is carved onto it. Now that sin has become a slave master, driving and controlling the man. There is no way for the human, to change his own heart by his own effort.

Read **44:15**— Sin has simply rendered the human heart dead to God, that neither...

- warning (like from Jeremiah),...
- disaster (from Yahweh), ...
- logic (like here in chapter 44 after the disaster), nor...
- one's own will power (any more than a leopard and his spots)...

...can turn it back to God.

Jeremiah 29

Jeremiah has written to the people going off into exile.⁵

Read **29:10**—

Read **29:12**—

Read 29:13— What makes Yahweh think that they will seek Him with all their hearts?

Jeremiah 31:31-37

Read **31:31-34**.

31:31— Yahweh is promising a new covenant.

31:32— Not like the old covenant, that the people broke.

31:33— *New hearts! New minds!* If the heart is wickedly deceitful above all things, and beyond cure, if not one can fix their own heart, the only way the

⁵ This letter is believed to have been written in 597 B.C. after the second deportation

heart is going to be healed is if Yahweh sovereignly and *miraculously* intervenes, removes the heart of stone, and replaces it with a heart of flesh.

- Under the old covenant was *external*. It was something that sinners needed to measure up to. But they don't have the ability, let alone the nature desire to do so.
- What makes the new covenant so superior to the old covenant is that now the law is *within* the people of God. It's part of people. It shapes and comprises their desires, wills, wants, loves, etc. It is something they delight in doing!

Read **32:40**— Yahweh now equips His people with hearts fit for never turning back from Him!

Read **31:34**

Read **Hebrews 9:11, 15**— The 2nd reason why the new covenant is superior to the old:

- Under the old covenant animal sacrifices were made day in and day out. But they could *never* take away sins. They could only point forward to a sacrifice in the future that *would* take away sins.
- Hebrews 9:11— Christ's death was a ransom, a buying back of slavery to sins!⁶
- **Colossians 2:13-14**⁷— Have you this new heart?⁸

Jeremiah 34-45

Chapters 34-45 are about the last days of Jerusalem, just before and during its destruction in 586 BC.

Jeremiah 46-52

Then chapters 46-52 are Jeremiah's prophecies of judgment against other nations, including Babylon (cf. ch. 51)!

⁶ Jeremiah 33:17-26 is also worthy of attention here and what it says about Christ, but for time's sake we have to pass over it. However, the idea of "David, the servant of Yahweh" appears in Ezekiel too, so we'll pick it up there.

⁷ **Ephesians 2:1-10** is also a powerful affirmation of the same things.

⁸ Much of this language is taken from 2 Corinthians 4:3-6. John Piper has written an excellent book on these verses called *God is the Gospel*.

LAMENTATIONS

Context

Theme

We are in mourning because Yahweh has done this, even though it's our fault. Now we need Him to change our hearts, for He will again comfort us.

Outline W/ Pivotal Texts

- I. Lamentations 1-2 — An Acrostic⁹ According to the Hebrew Alphabet
- II. Lamentations 3-4 — An Acrostic at a Quicker, Acrostic Pace
- III. Lamentations 5 — A Fractionalized, Still Quicker, Acrostic

Theme Texts

Lamentations **3:37-40**

Lamentations **5:21**

Do you see there the prayer that Yahweh take the initiative to turn us to Himself, so *that we can* turn to Him?¹⁰

⁹ An "acrostic" is a poem where each successive line begins with the next letter in the alphabet. Strictly speaking an acrostic could also form a word or a phrase out of the first letters of the poetic lines. Whenever, they appear in the Old Testament they are constructed according to the Hebrew Alphabet

¹⁰ God's sovereignty in changing our hearts does not make us inert or lazy, but all the more active (cf. Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13; 1 Peter 4:10f).

Lamentations 3:31-33

Even though calamity is not always directly related to someone's sins, sometimes it *is*. When the Lord chastens us, we should examine our lives (cf. Proverbs 3:11f; Hebrews 12:5-13). But at the same time, as Christians, we should remember that the Lord's chastening is always an act of love on His behalf. He chastens to discipline us, and is eager to comfort again.

Conclusion