

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY! NOTES FOR THIS WEEK: 12/28-29/2020
THIS WEEK'S STUDY: *Jeremiah Chapters 9-10*

Monday 7pm Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS112, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484 - Mon 7 pm!

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 - Passcode: 087484

One tap mobile

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbjCPJpja>

Tuesday 7am Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340 - Tues 7 am!

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85309150746?pwd=Tk5oVjN0TzdpWjE3UC9Oam05a21uQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 0915 0746 - Passcode: 715340

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Phil Twente ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221 For Audio & notes from previous studies - www.ptwente.com

OPENING PRAYER – Introduction

Waymaker – Michael W. Smith/Vanessa C.

You are here, moving in our midst I worship You, I worship You
You are here, working in this place I worship You, I worship You
You are Waymaker, miracle worker Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are, Waymaker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness My God, that is who You are
You are here, touching every heart, I worship You, I worship You
You are here, turning lives around, I worship You, I worship You
Waymaker, miracle worker, Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are, Waymaker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness My God, that is who You are
I said that is who You are (that is who You are) That is who You are (that is who You are)
That is who You are (that is who You are) That is who You are (that is who You are)
Even when I can't see it, You're working Even when I can't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working You never stop, You never stop working
Even when I can't see it, You're working Even when I don't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working You never stop, You never stop working

Even when I can't see it, You're working
Even when I don't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working
Waymaker, miracle worker
Promise Keeper, Light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are (we know, we know, we know who you are)
Waymaker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are (ooh), That is who You are, That is who You are,
That is who You are, That is who You are, That is who You are, That is who You are

Review: *Jeremiah 9-10* – The Perils of False Teaching; The People Mourn in Judgment; Idols and the True God. The Coming Captivity of Judah

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: *Jeremiah 11-12* – The Broken Covenant; Jeremiah's Life Threatened; Jeremiah's Questions; The LORD Answers Jeremiah

The message at the gate of the temple has been completed. Now Josiah, the good king, has died. He, in disobedience, took the army to fight against the Egyptians and he was killed in battle. His son, Jehoahaz, took over the throne and was an evil man. All of the good that his father had done was undone by the son or begun to be undone. He only reigned for a couple of months and then he was replaced by Jehoiakim, who reigned for eleven years. He was an evil king and thus that nation has now begun its final plunge into sin, into moral decay and ultimately into defeat before their enemies. Jeremiah is called now to preach to the people in the next two chapters on the broken covenant.

The Broken Covenant

God has established a new covenant with man because God still wants fellowship. God wants to live in fellowship and communion with His creation. Now the old covenant was dependent upon man's obedience and what man would do. But man failed, so God has established a new covenant that is based upon what He has done through Jesus Christ. And now God requires that we believe on His work through Jesus Christ. He has made a new covenant that is attainable by all of us. By our believing in Jesus Christ we can have fellowship with God. We can live in harmony and union and enjoy the blessings of fellowship with God through this New Covenant. But Jeremiah is to tell them now about the broken covenant.

Jer 11:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Jer 11:2 "Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

- Jeremiah is to go throughout the country, especially to the city of Jerusalem with this message from God concerning the covenant. God spoke to Judah about their failure to keep the ancient covenant Israel made with God at Mount Sinai in the days of Moses (*Exo 24:1-8*), in which God promised to supply all the material and spiritual needs of the infant nation in return for undivided worship and obedience.

Jer 11:3 and say to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant Jer 11:4 which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,'

- **Jeremiah was probably holding the Book of Deuteronomy - , 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant.** When Israel made the covenant with God at Mount Sinai, there were specific curses pronounced against those who violated the covenant (*Deu 27:15-26*). God, here is simply promising that He would enforce the terms of the covenant made **in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt.** One aspect of this curse is that of not living in the best way because of our disobedience. The second aspect is that of God's chastening us because of our disobedience!
- ***Obey my voice, and do them.*** The Old Covenant was dependent upon their obedience and their doing the things. Our New Covenant is based upon our faith in what Christ has done. according to all which I command you: so shall you be My people, and I will be your God: That is the basis for this relationship; your keeping the covenant, obeying My voice, doing all that I have commanded you. Then you will be My people and I will be your God.

- **From the iron furnace:** This is the third place in the Scriptures where Israel's agony in Egypt is described as an **iron furnace** (*Deu 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51*), likely referring to Israel's slave labor in Egypt in literal iron furnaces.

Jer 11:5 *that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' as it is this day." And I answered and said, "So be it, LORD." Jer 11:6* **Then the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Hear the words of this covenant and do them.**

- **To give them a land flowing with milk and honey:** God fulfilled all His obligations of the covenant, even blessing Israel with an abundant land. It was the children of Israel who did not obey their obligations of the covenant.
- **And I answered and said, "So be it, LORD:** "When God reviewed His promises in the heart of Jeremiah, even though they involved a curse on those who neutralized His words, there arose from it a deep response. He answered and said, Amen (*So be it*), O Lord. What a remarkable example for us all!
- **Proclaim all these words in...Judah... and in Jerusalem:** Jeremiah's assignment was to preach this message of the broken covenant and its consequences in Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah.
- **Hear the words...and do them.** James spoke about those who were hearers of the word but not doers deceiving themselves. So Jeremiah is saying, "Hear the words and do them."

Jer 11:7 *For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, "Obey My voice." Jer 11:8* **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.' "**

- **For I earnestly exhorted your fathers:** God gave the people of Israel many warnings and encouragements to do what was right under the covenant. He wanted their obedience and did all He could to cultivate and encourage it. Using a figure of speech, God even **rising early and exhorting** them. Throughout their history God was crying unto them to obey, to keep the covenant
- **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates** (going with **their emotions** or **how we feel about it!**) **of his evil heart:** Instead of following God's instructions and warnings, they went their own way followed their own evil heart. God commanded them to obey. They did not obey but they just turned a deaf ear to God and they did what they pleased. Thus God said that the curses were going to come. Therefore, God said, **I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant.**

Jer 11:9 *And the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

- **A conspiracy has been found:** God told Jeremiah that the men of Judah and Jerusalem were organized in a conspiracy. The defection from the covenant was as general as if it had been the result of preconcerted arrangement. Perhaps on a human level they were unaware of the coordination of the conspiracy, and perhaps spiritual forces of wickedness in high places organized it. Yet it existed and mattered just the same.

Jer 11:10 *They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers."*

- **They have turned their back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words:** The conspiracy was a work of both breaking the commandments of God, and refusing to hear the warnings of God. It ended up being a conspiracy to break their covenant with God. They determined, they go together, they determined that they were going to go back to the wicked practices that were subdued by Josiah. They were going to go back to those pagan idols and those pagan gods.

Jer 11:11 *Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.*

- **Therefore!** Because they had failed to keep the covenant. They did not obey God. They had broken the covenant. **I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape:** This was simply the promise consequence of disobedience under the Mosaic Covenant (*Deu 27:15-26*).
- **though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.** There comes a place in a man's life who has continually hardened his heart to the work of the Spirit, to the voice of God where that man can go beyond the place of repentance. In the gospel of *John 12:38* speaking of the Pharisees said, "Therefore they could not believe." Not that they would not but that they could not believe. It is possible for a person to go

beyond a place of repentance. Here God said that they have gone beyond it. When *they cry now, I will not listen*. I won't harken. They can pray to Me now but it is not going to do any good.

Jer 11:12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

- **One way the people of Judah broke the Mosaic Covenant was by their worship of the false** and pagan gods of the surrounding nations. When the LORD cursed them under the terms of that covenant, they would find no help from those gods.

Jer 11:13 For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

- **They had as many gods as they had cities** and as many alters in every street of Jerusalem; altars unto Baal where they burned their incense unto Baal. The city of Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah. The city that was destroyed while Jeremiah was still alive by the Babylonian army who left the city desolate. They broke down the houses, they broke down the temple and the city was just left in heaps, desolate heaps. Recent excavations have found hundreds of little idols, stone, wooden. The very idols that Jeremiah was speaking about. They have discovered there in this ancient city of David and you can see the Bible come alive.

Jer 11:14 "So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble. (Jer 7:16) "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. (Jer 14:11-12) Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. [12] When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence."

- **God is saying to Jeremiah, "Do not pray for them."** He told Jeremiah that back in 7:16. "The LORD said to Jeremiah: pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry, prayer for them, neither make intercession to me for I will not hear you." He said it 14:11 once more: "Then said the LORD unto me, pray not for this people for their good." They had gone so far that God said just not to pray for them anymore.
- **At an earlier time in their history when Samuel was judge in the land,** the people demanded a king to reign over them like the other nations. And Samuel was greatly hurt because it marked a period in history where they were leaving God's best, a theocracy, and moving into a monarchy. They were to be a people that were just to be known as a people who were ruled by God; a theocracy. But they were demanding now a monarchy. Samuel went to the LORD and the LORD said, "Do unto them as they desire." When Samuel addressed the people he rebuked them for rejecting God as their king. As he finished this scathing denunciation of them they said, "Don't stop praying for us. Pray for us." Samuel said; (ISA 12:23) Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.
- **Now, they have gone so low that God is saying to Jeremiah not to pray for them.** Don't make intercession, don't cry to Me. For I will not hear you. It is useless, I will not hear when they pray. How tragic that a person can go so far the God gives up on them. When He says, "There is no sense in talking about it anymore, they have gone too far."

Jer 11:15 "What has My beloved to do in My house, Having done lewd deeds with many? And the holy flesh has passed from you. When you do evil, then you rejoice.

- **What has My beloved?** God regarded Israel as His *beloved*; yet they played the part of the unfaithful spouse, being unfaithful to false gods. Therefore, God appropriately asked why they were still in His *house*. So God said concerning Israel, the sacrifices, the peace offerings, the communion offering. The peace offering was that of communion. They would bring the peace offering and they would roast it and people would sit down and eat it and fellowship with God and worship the Lord and it was called the holy flesh.
- **When you do evil, then you rejoice:** This is the description of a sin-sick society. Not only do they sin; they openly *rejoice* in their *evil*.

Jer 11:16 The LORD called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit. With the noise of a great tumult He has kindled fire on it, And its branches are broken. Psa 52:8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. Jer 11:17 "For the LORD of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house

of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal."

- **Israel was likened to a green olive tree.** This describes the expressions of love and endearment God gave to Israel. He loved them tenderly and deeply; yet they returned His love with unfaithfulness. But now the **branches are broken**, once beautiful, now desolate. Paul brings up this olive tree symbolism in *Romans 11*, how that God cut off the natural branches and He grafted in, contrary to nature, the Gentiles, that they may partake of the fatness of the tree: the promises of God, the blessings of the covenant. We Gentiles were, contrary to nature, grafted in and we have become the beneficiaries of the covenant blessings that God promised His people. He promised to Abraham. But Paul said, "*Be careful, don't boast against the natural branch, the nation of Israel, for if God grafted us in contrary to nature He is also able to restore again the natural branch.*" And he affirms that God will for all of Israel shall be saved when the deliverer comes forth out of Zion.
- **He has kindled fire on it, and its branches are broken:** Though God once held His people in such dear regard, that would not stop His appropriate judgment against them. They rejected God's endearment and love. Though He had **planted** them, He still **pronounced doom against** them for their stubborn sin and idolatry.

Jer 11:18 Now the LORD gave me knowledge of it, and I know it; for You showed me their doings.

- **God allowed Jeremiah insight into what was going on.** God showed Jeremiah the **doings** of his enemies. By what follows (*Jer 11:21*), we understand that these **enemies** were the men of Anathoth, which was Jeremiah's home village. This was an example of divine protection over the prophet. The day might come when God would allow Jeremiah to lay down his life in faithfulness to the LORD; but that day was not yet.

Jer 11:19 But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more."

- **b. But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter:** This was Jeremiah's state before God warned him (**I did not know that they had devised schemes against me**). He was defenseless before God showed him that his enemies wanted to cut him down like a tree. There were guys plotting Jeremiah's death. He did not know it. He was innocent like a lamb and did not realize it, that they were leading him to the slaughter. And here in his own home town there were men that were conspiring to put him to death.
- This reminds us of Jesus, who was also rejected by His own people (*John 1:11*). In Isaiah's great prophecy of the Suffering Servant, he described the Messiah as *a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7, Acts 8:32)*. Jeremiah's faithfulness to God built in him a growing likeness to the Messiah who perfectly represented God (*John 1:18, John 14:9*).

Jer 11:20 But, O LORD of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause. (Heb 10:30) For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

- **Knowing the threat against his life, Jeremiah did the right thing** – he prayed. He began his prayer addressing God as the **LORD of hosts**, a title recalling that God is the commander of heavenly armies.
- **You who judge righteously, testing the mind and heart:** Jeremiah prayed for protection, but not to be shielded as an evildoer. He looked for God's protection to be given according to His righteousness and perfect wisdom.
- **Let me see Your vengeance on them, for to You I have revealed my cause:** Properly, Jeremiah understood that **vengeance** belonged to the LORD (*Deu 32:35; Rom 12:19*). He **revealed his cause** to God and would trust Him to deal with it. Jeremiah fierce reaction to the plot may shock us, but God upheld it, for it asked no more than justice.

Jer 11:21 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand'— Jer 11:22 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; Jer 11:23 and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, even the year of their punishment.' "

- **Thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life:** It was the people of his own village who wanted to kill him. Jeremiah has asked the LORD to take vengeance on those men that seek

his life, saying, *Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand*: This was the threat they made against Jeremiah. It was clear that what they hated was the message from God that he brought. The local priests at *Anathoth* may have resented that their shrine was shut down and may have hated Jeremiah because he supported Josiah.

- ***Behold, I will punish them***: God promised to bring particular judgment against the men of Anathoth. Jeremiah must have had mixed feelings about this; he was happy that God defended him and would recompense his enemies, but no doubt grieved at the judgment to come upon the men of his own village.
- The punishment is, *The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine*; that shall come on the land through the desolations caused by the Babylonian invasion.

Jeremiah's Complaint

JEREMIAH 12 - Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; I know that you are righteous and I want to talk to you about a couple of things. It is always important that I do not challenge God. It is fine to question God. There is nothing wrong with questioning. It would be unrealistic not to have questions. Things happen in our lives that we don't understand and we need many times to question God and there is nothing wrong with questioning God. It is wrong to challenge God. Now Jeremiah had a couple of questions.

Jer 12:1 Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?

- ***Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments***: Jeremiah wanted to ask God a question, and he did so in an appropriate way – first recognizing and submitting to God's righteousness.
- ***Why does God allow wicked people to go on prospering?*** Now, if you were God would you allow the wicked to prosper? I would cut them off in a hurry. It was a problem in the mind of Jeremiah. Here were these wicked men of Anathoth who were plotting to kill him. And they seemed to be so happy and prosperous. It troubled Jeremiah. "Lord, why do you allow the wicked to prosper? Why are all of them so happy that deal so treacherously? Why do You allow them to be so happy when they deal treacherously?" And this was a real problem in the mind of the prophet. They seemed to *prosper*, while Jeremiah often suffered.

Jer 12:2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth But far from their mind. .

- ***You have planted them***: Jeremiah considered that the wicked could not enjoy any prosperity or pleasure unless God allowed it. The *fruit* they enjoyed ultimately came from God in one way or another.
- ***You are near in their mouth but far from their mind***: They talk about God but yet their hearts are alienated completely from God. The people Jeremiah had in mind were those who made an outward profession of religion but did not really care about God and the things of God.

Jer 12:3 But You, O LORD, know me; You have seen me, And You have tested my heart toward You. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter (not much weeping right now!), And prepare them for the day of slaughter. Jer 12:4 How long will the land mourn, And the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, For the wickedness of those who dwell there, Because they said, "He will not see our final end."

- ***This is true. God knows you and has seen you and He has tested your heart***. God puts us through testing. Sometimes we pass and sometimes we fail. Jeremiah is saying, "LORD, you know that my heart is sincere toward You, my mind is toward You. But these men are insincere. They may worship You with their lips but their hearts are filled with deceit, cunning and murder."
- ***Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter***: In the previous chapter Jeremiah felt that he was like a *sheep for the slaughter*. He prayed that the wicked would now be put in that same place.
- ***How long will the land mourn?*** Jeremiah is upset. "LORD, I know You are righteous, but I really have some problems here. I want to talk to You about this." He is all upset with the LORD's patience. Oh, the patience of God and the goodness of God even when dealing with evil men.
- ***Because God did not answer the wicked with judgment, it brought mourning even to the land. He will not see our final end!*** Their careless attitude and incorrect belief had an effect even upon the natural world.

The Lord Answers Jeremiah

Jer 12:5 "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?"

- ***If ...running with the footmen...have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses?:*** God's answer to Jeremiah was both powerful and profound. Without directly answering the question, God encouraged Jeremiah to regard his present challenge as a preparation for greater challenges to come. **"Jeremiah, toughen up!"** You have not seen anything yet. It is going to get worse. Tough medicines, but that is exactly what we need to hear! Things are going to get harder, but you will be able to stand as you trust in Me! And the question is: ***how are you going to contend with the horses?*** And the answer is: you can not contend with the horses **except through the strength and the help of the LORD**. Jeremiah, you are going to have to seek My strength and seek My help and you are just going to have to trust Me for your survival. All of us as we grow in our Christian walk will realize that if we are going to survive it is only going to be by trusting the LORD. I am not sufficient for the battle but my sufficiency is of Christ and He is all sufficient. He brings us to that place of just trusting in Him.
- ***And if in the land of peace, in which you trust, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan:*** This analogy supplies the same lesson as the analogy of the footmen and the horses. The present circumstance is a challenge, yet a greater one waits. "If you complain about the simple things God has already asked you to do, then you lack the spiritual strength to do what he wants you to do next.
- ***Floodplain of the Jordan:*** In the times of peace you have had problems, what are going to do when it really overflows like the Jordan? If Jeremiah is afraid of the people among whom he dwelt. God is saying how will you do in the flood of the Jordan? This ought to be a rebuke to every Christian who is subject to the fear of man.

Jer 12:6 For even your brothers, the house of your father, Even they have dealt treacherously with you; Yes, they have called a multitude after you. Do not believe them, Even though they speak smooth words to you.

- ***For even your brothers, the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you:*** For Jeremiah, the smaller challenge was the adversity and hatred he faced from the men of his own village Anathoth. The greater challenge was the **multitude** they had called against him.
- ***Do not believe them, even though they speak smooth words to you:*** The open adversity was another example of the smaller challenge; the bigger challenge would be the **smooth words** and flattery others would use against Jeremiah.
- ***Jeremiah, even your own family, you brothers, have dealt treacherously, so you cannot trust them.*** Then God is speaking. This is sort of a lament. This is the heart of God. And now you are seeing the heart of God. Here is a people who have failed. Here are a people who are primed for judgment. Here are a people for whom there can be no prayers offered. They have gone beyond prayer. Even if they prayed God will not hearken. But what is the heart of God towards these rebellious evil people. Just think, how alone, must Jeremiah have felt? This indeed is an example of the cost of discipleship! (***Mat 16:24***) *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

Jer 12:7 "I have forsaken My house, I have left My heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies. Jer 12:8 My heritage is to Me like a lion in the forest; It cries out against Me; Therefore I have hated it.

- ***I have forsaken My house*** (My people), ***I have left My heritage*** (***Judah***): Jeremiah spoke to the future when God will give His **dearly beloved** people **into the hand of her enemies**. He speaks of them still as the dearly beloved of His soul. Oh, that stubborn love that God has for man. He won't let go in spite of their evil, in spite of their broken covenant, in spite of their failure God is still saying, My beloved! My dearly beloved of My soul, I have to give them over to the hand of her enemies!
- ***My heritage to Me is like a lion in the forest; it cries out against Me; therefore I have hated it.*** He hated what they were doing. They were crying out against God like a lion crying out against God and God hated what they were doing but God still loved them. That is so often true, God hates what a person does though He still love that person: According to Jacob's prophecy in ***Genesis 49:9***, Judah was supposed to be God's lion. They fulfilled the **lion-like** role, but they **roared against** God instead of **for Him** – it was a roar of rebellion.

Jer 12:9 My heritage is to Me like a speckled vulture; The vultures all around are against her. Come, assemble all the beasts of the field, Bring them to devour! Jer 12:10 "Many rulers

have destroyed My vineyard, They have trodden My portion underfoot; They have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. Jer 12:11 They have made it desolate; Desolate, it mourns to Me; The whole land is made desolate, Because no one takes it to heart.

- ***like a speckled vulture; The vultures all around are against her.*** Like the odd chicken, how the rest of them all peck on her! The speckled bird, all the rest are picking on her. So all of the surrounding nations are pecking on Israel.
- ***Many rulers have destroyed My vineyard, They have trodden My portion underfoot; They have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. How long*** before we start taking things to heart. Look around at what is happening. Look around at what is happening in the music scene. Look what is happening in the movie industry. Look what is happening in the government. Look what is happening to the economy. How long before we begin to take these things to heart, to realize that we are in deep serious trouble.
- ***They have made it desolate; desolate, it mourns to Me:*** When the judgment comes upon the land of Judah, it will make the land *desolate* – because there will be no one to care for it (*no one takes it to heart*).

Jer 12:12 The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights in the wilderness, For the sword of the LORD shall devour From one end of the land to the other end of the land; No flesh shall have peace.

- ***The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights.*** This devouring sword of Babylon.

Jer 12:13 They have sown wheat but reaped thorns; They have put themselves to pain but do not profit. But be ashamed of your harvest Because of the fierce anger of the LORD."

13They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit:

- ***sown wheat but reaped thorns.*** That is, painful labor, but nothing will come of the labor. All their projects shall fail. They are enemies to God, and therefore cannot have His blessing.
- ***But be ashamed of your harvest because of the fierce anger of the LORD:*** God spoke to the invading Babylonians, warning them that they should take no pleasure or satisfaction in their **harvest** upon the cities and land of Judah. They would have to reckon with *the fierce anger of the LORD*.

Jer 12:14 Thus says the LORD: "Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.

- ***I will pluck them out of their land:*** God warned those would attack and exile Israel, that *He* would also dispossess them of *their land*. Even though God used them as an instrument of His judgment, He would nevertheless judge them for their evil and brutality against Judah.
- ***And pluck out the house of Judah from among them:*** God would deal with the invaders (the Babylonian Empire); but He would also take care of His people and bring them back (*pluck out*) a remnant to return to the land and the promise once again.

Jer 12:15 Then it shall be, after I have plucked them out, that I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land.

- ***I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land:*** The **promise of exile and judgment was sure**; but so was the **promise of compassion and return!** Jeremiah need not despair at the seeming prosperity of the wicked and trouble of the righteous; God would move all things according to His perfect plan. Remember no matter how far one goes into a backslidden condition, God is always working toward a happy ending!

Jer 12:16 And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they shall be established in the midst of My people. Jer 12:17 But if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation," says the LORD.

- ***If they will learn carefully the ways of My people:*** God made a remarkable offer to Babylonians and to any who opposed His people. If they would turn to Him and **swear by His name**, then they could **be established in the midst of My people**. They could share in the blessing and goodness of God among His people. This reminds us that God's regard for Israel was never based on race or ethnicity, but was based on love and faithfulness to the LORD. Any nation who would honor the LORD in this way would gain the same benefits as belonged to ethnic Israel.
- ***The people were all swearing by Baal,*** but He wants them to again **to swear by His name saying; "As the LORD lives". ***But if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation:*** The blessing for**

turning to the LORD was great; but the price for rejecting God was also great. They could expect the judgment of God, no matter their present prosperity or superiority.

Closing Prayer

May the LORD be with you, watch over and keep you in His love. We rejoice over the New Covenant that God has made. The New Covenant whereby we have fellowship with Him. But not only fellowship with Him but the power of His Spirit within us to help us to live as God would have us to live. And so, may this week you experience God's help and God's strength in your places of weakness and may you grow in your walk and in your relationship with Him through this week as He ministers by His Spirit.