


Note

Jeremiah – Part 1 to 2

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
Before 2100 BC	Job Elihu	Job
About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC Era of prophets	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth
	Eli Samuel Saul David	1 Samuel
About 1000 BC Era of princes	Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon	1 Samuel 2 Samuel
	Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu	1 kings
	Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah	2 kings
	Saul David Solomon	1 Chronicles
	Solomon Rehoboam Asa Jehoshaphat Jehoram Joash Hezekiah Josiah	2 Chronicles
About 500 BC Era of priests	Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah Haggai Zechariah	Ezra Nehemiah
	Esther Mordecai Haman Ahasuerus	Esther
	Isaiah Ahaz Hezekiah	Isaiah
	Jeremiah Baruch Zedekiah	Jeremiah 

Summary

Jeremiah - Part 1 of 2.....3

Jeremiah records God’s repetitive warnings and prophecies given to the prophet Jeremiah over 40 years.

The warnings foretell the overthrow of Jerusalem by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and the carrying away of Judah to Babylon as slaves for 70 years.

Jeremiah’s message also contains prophecies of God’s restoration for the people of Israel to be fulfilled after their return from exiles.

Jeremiah - Part 2 of 2.....14

The fullness of God’s character – His love, faithfulness and holiness is shown in the midst of His wrath and judgment.

Jeremiah points to a new covenant that God would make with His people by writing His law on the hearts of His people through the giving of the Holy Spirit.

The new covenant reflects the immeasurable grace that God demonstrates towards all believers.

Transcript

Jeremiah – Part 1 of 2

Today we come to the book of Jeremiah. I trust you have gone through Isaiah, either by reading it or listened to an oral Bible, which I like to do. I like to listen to an oral Bible with someone reading, as I follow the words with my eyes seeing, with my ears hearing the way it's properly read so that I can feel the poetry. I hope you have gone through the book of Isaiah. It is a very long book. But let me tell you, the book of Jeremiah is longer than Isaiah, in terms of the number of words. Isaiah has more chapters (66) than Jeremiah with only 52, but Jeremiah is longer. To be honest with you, I always struggle to read through the book of Jeremiah. In the past, I read through the Bible many times but when I get to Jeremiah, oftentimes, I struggled to go through because there are several things about the book of Jeremiah that make it difficult to get through. Almost all of us who struggle can honestly say, “Wow, I can hardly finish this book!”

These are four reasons why a person struggles when reading the book of Jeremiah.

First, the book of Jeremiah is the longest major prophet book in the Bible. Jeremiah was written after the book of Isaiah, the longer one. These two books are sharing God's heart. The writers are sharing God's heart, pleading with Israel, “Please come back!” It is like a mother having a really bad son. All his life he is about to go into total destruction. The mom is pleading with him. He spent his life rejecting his mother. He spent his life doing everything wrong, hurting her. Yet, she never gives up on him. This is a picture of God showing us in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel His pleading with Israel.

The children of Israel had been taken out of the wilderness, protected by God, brought into the promised land. They were protected by the judges and kings. After 1000 years of endless irritation and rebellion to God, He is still pleading with the Israelites to return to Him. God used people like Jeremiah. I hope you see the heart of God instead of the lengthy reading or the seemingly boring information. When your mom is pleading, you whine, “Stop it, Mom.

I've heard that before. Stop nagging.” But when you see the heart behind that, you realize how amazing a mother's heart is. I hope you can see God's heart in this long, lengthy book.

Jeremiah is more than 10% of the entire Bible. Jeremiah and Isaiah are roughly equally long, and make up 20% of the Bible. Isaiah is followed by Jeremiah, then Ezekiel. These three books are long and cover 25% of the Bible, which is one quarter of the Bible. Out of the 66 books, 25% of the Bible contains pleading. It focuses on God's appeal to Israel. You see the heart of God. The book is long because Jeremiah had a very long ministry-40 years! He ministered as a prophet to five Kings.

Second, the book of Jeremiah is very difficult to read because there is no chronology. It is not the same when you read the Book of Kings and Samuel where there is an order and direction. We are able to understand when we can see things moving along, but in Jeremiah it's random. No topics, no chronology, no structure. It is like a mother's speech, begging her children. It comes out naturally from her heart. It doesn't need a lot of chronology. Heart is very different from the mind. Our Christianity is very intellectual, very brainy. We forget that God is also very much 'heart.'

This book is a collection of sermons, warnings and messages of Jeremiah for over 40 years. This book is collected basically by a scribe called Baruch. You will find it in chapter 36. It tells us that after 20 years of ministry, Jeremiah was imprisoned. He could not go anywhere to warn people. He got a scribe named Baruch and told him to write down his messages. Baruch faithfully wrote down everything that Jeremiah said. Furthermore, Baruch, being a good guy, went to collect anecdotes of Jeremiah's life. There are narratives regarding what Jeremiah did in a certain time. He found the events in the midst of the messages. Basically, this book is about the messages of Jeremiah with some narration of events in his life.

Third, the words and utterances sound depressing. Jeremiah was the last prophet before the siege and the exile of Jerusalem. That was the national historical catastrophe of the Israelites. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed and burned and the people were brought into exile. Jeremiah was the last prophet before this catastrophe. Can you imagine his heart seeing 1000 years of God building up His people totally gone? He is seeing it with his eyes. It is a picture of God seeing it with his eyes, like a mother seeing a child, a beautiful child she gave birth to with all the potential, totally engaged in drugs,

crime, and wickedness. Can you imagine the heart pleading with him? "Please, before you hang by the gallows, please come back. Please make a change."

All the events coming up to this was sad, but this was the saddest part. When you see the end of something that has so much potential but end in destruction, like David the glorious king and king Solomon ruling a vast empire, the people coming, looking up to his wisdom, seeing the glory of the temple he built. The Jews became the focus of the world during the time of Solomon. Eventually, you see a slow deterioration. It is compared to a company going towards bankruptcy, that is why it is so depressing. Jeremiah had to deal with the last five Kings of Israel. The first was Josiah. He was a reformer, but after him, the rest of the four kings were weak, sinful, terrible kings. Jeremiah was warning them, pleading with them.

Fourth, the book of Jeremiah sounds boring. It seems to keep repeating itself, what the other prophets have said in the past. He has been warning them about the same sins Isaiah forewarned about -idolatry, immorality, injustice. These sins hurt and grieved God. Sometimes we think, "Oh, this guy does not know the Bible. He is not very smart. He does not learn the Bible." You think that's a big thing? No, it is idolatry! Many Christians do not see that way. We have so many idols in our life, except they are not in figure and form.

An idol is anything we put highly, trust highly, depend upon highly, love highly more than God. In our lives as Christians there are many idols. Just like the idols in Israel, the golden cow, which was acceptable by everybody. How can you call that idolatry? Everybody worships the golden cow. We also worship God. That's what the Israelites kept saying. We worship Jehovah God and add a few idols and a few extras: Baal, the sun, the moon, the bulls. What's wrong? Christians do exactly the same. We trust God but we trust our jobs more to keep us happy. We trust pleasures to find satisfaction. We trust pills to keep us in good health. "God? I worship Him, too!" But where is your trust? We see idolatry. God repeatedly reminded them about this sin. There was a season in Israel when there were idols everywhere. They were in every hill and every tree. In the same way, Christians have idols everywhere. We do not even realize it just like the Israelites who failed to see those problems on the shrine seriously. We reason that we do not worship those things but Jehovah God only.

Whenever there is idolatry, immorality is present. It's everywhere. The filthy jokes we read and say has to be on sexuality in order to become saleable and interesting. Injustice is being done also. I have seen Christian employers terribly mistreat their employees. I have seen domestic helpers in Christian homes shockingly treated by their bosses because they are poor from another poor country. It is very sad! These are the same sins Jeremiah hammered to remind us. Christians, listen now. we commit these same sins which God hates.

So, these are four reasons why we struggle when reading the book of Jeremiah:

1. lengthy-showing the heart of God;
2. difficult-ramble, jumble, random-showing a person's natural feelings with great emotion
3. the warnings given sound so depressing
4. repetitive-reiterating sins (idols) to avoid that grieve the heart of God.

In spite of all these reasons, there is a purpose. You are peeping into the heart of God who does not want to give up on us until the very end. What a hope we have in God! That is why we can share this hope with someone who keeps on rejecting God.

"He has hated God for eight years of his life; he cursed God. Does it mean when a person says sorry to God on his deathbed, God will forgive him?"

Jeremiah says if you return to God, He will not destroy this place (Jeremiah 4:1; 15:19). After thousand years of failure, the people of Israel still got a chance from God who is full of mercy.

LIFE or Background

The life summary of Jeremiah is written in Jeremiah chapter one.

Who is Jeremiah? He came from a priestly line of Eli. He was born during the reign of Manasseh, the worst king ever in Judah. According to tradition, Manasseh sought to kill Isaiah and he fled to a cedar and hid in the tree trunk. Upon knowing it by the fringe of his garment, Manasseh ordered the cedar to be sawn including the body of Isaiah. The Bible is silent on how Isaiah died. Hebrews 11:37 says, "...they were sawn asunder..." There were people sawn asunder. Manasseh was a wicked king. He practiced sacrificing young children to the god of Canaan, Moloch. He was full of violence, ruling a lawless city with corrupt officials. Jeremiah was born at this time.

His name means 'to tear down and to build up.' The meaning of Jeremiah's name summarizes his ministry. His job was 'to tear down,' by telling people that if they disobey God, everything will be gone; but if they will turn back to God, He will 'build [them] up'. This is Christianity. If you continue to sin you are forever in deep trouble, but if you turn to God, His mercy can build you up again.

Jeremiah was ordained to be a prophet unto the nations before his birth. He was ordained in his mother's womb just like John the Baptist. God can work in us before we are born. Every one of us is special. You do not abort a child. He could have been ordained to become a prophet.

He was ordained about 17 years of age but actually God already separated him from his mother's womb to become a prophet. He was a very shy boy. He said, "I cannot speak!" and God gave him the ability to speak. Isn't that amazing? He was the last prophet before and after the fall of Jerusalem. He got to be the most powerful prophet since he was the final one. Jeremiah was like in a relay race. The last runner must be the best runner. He was the one who can't speak but God has a way of choosing people for His own glory. His task is very difficult before Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.

Jeremiah is called 'the weeping prophet' pleading like a mother to a son who will not turn. He was also called a traitor by everyone, including the king. He told the king to surrender to the Babylonians, otherwise, the city, the temple, and the people would be burned. He sounded like a traitor. "Surrender to the enemy before we even fight?"

The false prophets keep on telling, "Nobody would ever conquer Jerusalem! Impossible. This is God's city. No one can destroy this temple because it is God's temple!" Jeremiah opposed what they said. Can you imagine the animosity from hundreds of false prophets who tell a lie, while only one man tells the truth? If you tell the priests that the temple is gone, they are jobless. The priests hated him. The people hated him. "You are idolatrous, immoral, unjust!" reminded Jeremiah.

Hence, he had a super hard life. God told him, "They will never listen to you!" No point. The people would not turn to God. What a hard and fruitless ministry Jeremiah had, no wonder he was called 'the weeping prophet.' He encountered many difficulties. All the prophets wept, were sad, and had hard lives.

Jeremiah was not allowed to get married because the city will be destroyed. His kids will starve in the siege just like everybody else. During the siege in Jerusalem the people ate their own babies. At the end of his life, he was kidnapped into exile in Egypt. Tradition says he was stoned to death by his fellow countrymen in Egypt and died alone. Sad. God's prophets are often described that way, yet they did it. They were able to accomplish what God has called them to do. Why? Because they saw something bigger and better.

What was his ministry? First, Jeremiah warned the people about God's judgment for their wickedness. Second, Jeremiah told them of the impending destruction of Jerusalem from the Babylonians. The northern kingdom, Samaria, had fallen to the Assyrians over hundred years earlier. This time, he was telling that the Assyrians are not the ones to conquer them but the Babylonians. True enough, the Babylonians, who are not in great power at first, came and knocked off the Assyrians. Eventually, the Babylonians became powerful and a threat to them. God commanded Jeremiah to tell the people, "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon is my servant."

How come the priests are God's servants and Nebuchadnezzar is God's servant, too? They were mad at Jeremiah when he said that. Finally, God's patience came to an end. After a thousand years, God says, "Enough! These people will not turn to Me." God used Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the city as His servant. He destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem and carried the Jewish population captives.

The third part of Jeremiah's ministry is restoration. He has good news to tell that Israel will be restored. After the exile, it is not the end. God will never forsake Israel. As God has ordained the day and the night, you can be sure that God ordains it until the end of time. God has chosen Israel as His people; He will never forsake them. Israel will be restored. The good news is that Israel will be restored.

Personally, the best part of this book helps me have a better understanding of the verses in Jeremiah 31:33-34.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, said the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them

unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Does this sound like our faith, our New Testament, New Covenant faith, I will make a new covenant with that agreement. Of course, he does not mention Christ here but many times Christ is referred as the Righteous Branch of David. He says that one day the law that was written on tablets of stone which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai will be written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Our sins will be forgiven through Christ. He tells us the secret of our joy as believers is that we have the Holy Spirit who writes in our heart many things that would erase Adam and Eve's sin. May your eyes be opened to see this hope that lasts forever.

The tablets of stone could not go with them. The temple cannot go with them, but God will not be in the temple, but in their hearts. They will know God, not because there is a temple where they can see the things around them and learn about God. No, no, no. It's not like an Israelite boy going to the temple and saying, "Papa, why must so many sheep die?" "Oh, son, remember Abraham?" and then you will tell the story.

Soon every Christian will know in his heart that Christ died for each one. How sure are you that Christ died for you? You never saw him. How do you know all your sins are forgiven? Are you sure there is heaven? Have you seen it? I know and I believe with all my heart because God says in His Word, the Bible. I met Christians who cannot read and write but you know what? Their faith is as strong as a rock.

The unique part of Jeremiah's ministry- he told them that God is not interested in all the burnt offerings. That freaked out the priests, the prophets, false prophets.

"What do you mean, God is not interested with the offerings?" People thought Jeremiah was denigrating or belittling the sacredness of their sacrifices. No, he was not. God is more concerned about your heart; YOU, having an obedient heart, not the rituals. Jeremiah was preparing them for a day when there will be no temple in Babylon or in Jerusalem after the Exile because it will be burned and destroyed. The temple does not exist anymore. He was preparing them to worship God without the temple.

When they were in Babylon, they started what they call 'synagogues'. Jeremiah was very much a part of this idea that they could worship God in

synagogues. The word synagogue comes from 'synthesis'- gathering together. There was no temple but they gathered together in Babylon. Until now, Jews gather in synagogues to pray, praise and study God's Word.

Do you know your church, the church you and I go to? The Christian church is nothing more than a synagogue of Christian believers, not Israelites. That's all it is. Jeremiah laid the foundation of synagogue worship, which no other prophet could figure out, that you can worship God without the tabernacle or the temple. Right from Sinai they were told to build a tabernacle. It continued till they built a temple. All worship was focused in the temple. But Jeremiah was the first and only prophet that said, "those are not the issue." He laid down this foundation that one day you will be the temple of God. The words of God that were written on tablets, put in the ark, in the temple, are now put in the ark of your heart. This is the beauty of this book. In the midst of all the darkness, there is this light shining. We see here the return and restoration of Israel, the writing of God's law in the heart, and the Righteous Branch from David, all written in this book, but lost in the mass of depressing news.

The fourth ministry of Jeremiah was to tell the Israelites that God will judge the nations that He used to judge them, especially Babylon. Many nations had been allowed by God to attack Israel whenever they were naughty. But most of the nations allowed by God to punish them over-did it. They became wicked and proud. The last part of this book from chapter 46 to 51 shows God's judgment on those nations. In the process, they thought they were so powerful and so great. Jeremiah reminded the Israelites that they do not need to take revenge, for God will do it. Vengeance is God's.

The four-fold ministry : Warning to the people, impending destruction of Jerusalem, but then there's hope, Israel will be regathered and amazing things are going to happen in your heart; and the nations that punished you will be punished by God.

This was the fourfold job of Jeremiah for 40 years. 40 years - a time of testing! This weeping Prophet passed the test with full colors! I am sure, he is up there in heaven with high honors with my God.

A large part of this book is poetry. When God is venting his anger or pleading, it is in the form of poetry showing His heart. Whenever God is giving facts, it is in prose.

Probably, many of you do not realize that you still read this book like prose, by analysing word by word rather than feeling by feeling. That is why it is very

difficult for Christians when they read the Bible. It becomes so dry to most Christians rather than a beautiful book.

2nd Part of Jeremiah's ministry was acting out his poetry. His writing is full of feelings accompanied with acting. He carried a pot on his head and goes somewhere. He threw books into the river. He had to dramatize it. He did not only embarrass himself with his words but by his actions. It's like a lot of preachers stand in front of a congregation and just read their sermons and say, "I serve God!" I don't think so. I believe that when you serve God you stand up there and give your whole heart to your preaching. Preachers like to present scholarly messages. Maybe nine out of ten or 95 out of 100 preachers want to look and sound like scholars. They present facts accurately but all the feelings are missing. I cannot read the Bible nor preach without the emotions involved. I hope you will never preach the Bible with just a bunch of facts. In order to be more effective in your preaching, wrap it with feelings because God is not just 'head'. God is 'heart!' - a big heart.

Many parts of Jeremiah's book are full of prayers. They are real prayers. Pulpit prayers sound very nice. They do not miss a beat. They do not miss a punctuation. They sound well and are written theologically accurate. Not with Jeremiah's prayers. When you pray and talk with God you share and express your feelings naturally. It seems it is a sin to show one's emotion when praying. There are those who pray gravely, afraid to show feelings.

God wants us to be like a child who goes to the father and shares his feelings freely. Imagine your child wants to buy a dog. Would he give reasons by telling you, "Papa, you know why I like dogs? Because they are furry, loyal, and man's best friend. Please give me a dog." Is that the way a child talks, giving all the reasons first just to persuade the father to buy? No. A child naturally expresses his desire or wish to his father. Sometimes he would passionately say, "Papa, I really like dogs." You know, that's how Jeremiah prayed. Compare this to the prayers we pray nowadays, not a tear, no passion, just words. I hope we learn to pray from this book because that is what God wants us to do. He wants us to come to Him like children, talking heart to heart with God without restraint or reservation.

Basically, the book has four parts. Chapter One is a prologue. We get to know who is Jeremiah, how he was ordained, and how God has given him the courage to speak telling him, "You have to be bold!" From chapters 2-45 is

about Israel, scolding because they are not listening to Jeremiah's nagging and warnings.

From chapters 46-51 it tells about God's punishment to the other nations who became proud and bullied Israel. In the last chapter, amidst of all the dreadful events, something strange and beautiful happens. King Jehoiachin was taken out of prison and invited by king Evil-merodach of Babylon to eat with him. He was treated kindly for the rest of his life. It gives hope to the line of David. The Root of Jesse is still alive and the Righteous Branch will come up from this little stump or remnant that is left. This part seemed out of place in the story. Jeremiah was gone already. This chapter was written by some other than Jeremiah as a historical supplement to the preceding prophecies and a proper introduction to the book of Lamentations.

This is a brief overview of the book of Jeremiah. Do you see something in it? If you do not see God, why read the Bible? I do not really care about Jeremiah, but I see the love of God Who never gives up on His people. He has a huge heart. After punishing the nation of Israel for a long time because of their stubbornness, God came to a point and said, "I believe it is enough!" I see the feelings of God. He is full of compassion.

There is a verse found in Jeremiah 31 verse 20. In the King James translation states, "...my bowels are troubled for him..." We usually say, "My heart is broken." In our Western thinking, the heart is an organ that pumps blood. The heart does not feel. Any doctor, any primary school science student will tell you the heart does not feel; it pumps. But in our thinking it is the heart that feels. In the Hebrew thinking, it is not the heart; it is the belly. When they feel something, the bowels are troubled, which is actually more accurate. You see the bowels of God are troubled. I beg you, Christians, know the heart of God. When you have a Bible study, have a peek into the heart of God. I am so tired of scholarly Christianity. I am not against scholarship; I study harder than most all of you. If you do not see the heart of God, you miss everything. Bible study without being able to study the heart of God is heresy. It is false Bible study.

I earnestly appeal to you that when you read the book of Jeremiah, I suggest that you listen to it with a good reader. By doing so, you can feel the Living Bible actually expresses the feelings far better than the King James version because sometimes the words of the King James version are quite hard to understand. Again, may I suggest to you, "Please do not overlook the book

of Jeremiah.” Please do not ever say, “Oh, it is so boring!” May the Lord open your eyes and feel how much God loves you.

God bless you

Transcript

Jeremiah – Part 2 of 2

In the previous lesson on Jeremiah, we had an introduction to what for most people is the longest, most difficult, most depressing and most boring book in the Bible. I hope after the previous lesson, you got the message that God has a reason for writing this very long, very jumbled up, repetitive book.

God wants you to feel something that He feels. So today we go into the book itself. And I won't go into the many, very precious lessons that you can find in the book of Jeremiah because this is not a book study of Jeremiah. This is a book study of the Bible - 66 books. If we go into details in one book, we'll get stuck there, we fall back into the same trap that everybody falls into. They go into one book and can hardly move on. So the purpose of the series is for you to see all the books as one book, and I hope we will achieve that. So no details today, but I want you to see some things about this book. In fact, rather than to use the word, "see some things", I want you to feel some things about this book because for most of us, when we study we use our eyes, we use our mind and our intellect because we are trained in that way. We always say I call it "the Greek curse", the Greek curse on a religion that began with the Hebrews.

With the book of Jeremiah, particularly, I want you to feel more than to think. So I hope you can listen through and if you would like to have your eyes watching it, listen on an oral version of the Bible. You can hear it. Hear the reading, hear the poetry, hear and feel at the same time. You can see the words, that helps you to focus. That's what I normally do. I listen and yet the words are in front of me. I don't just read but I listen; primary faculty is listening. And the next most primary faculty when you do this in Jeremiah, particularly, is feel, so that your heart gets involved in the reading of this word. Then I hope when you do that, you can sense the HEART of God rather than the mind of God. I believe that most of us would struggle with this because I do. To be honest with you, I was trained as a boy to think. Since I was a little boy, it was "use your head", "use your head." Very seldom, are you told "use your heart", "feel for someone". So this is a struggle for almost all of us. I would say 99% of you would struggle with this.

Let's look at, maybe, one or two verses. Let's look at Jeremiah 8:21. And get the feel as Jeremiah feels. I hope you will feel and then you will sense and know the heart of God.

This is Jeremiah 8:21: For the hurt of the daughter of My people am I hurt; I am black, wounded; astonishment had taken hold on me.

I don't think we have ever felt that way. The hurt, the feeling when something maybe affects the name of God; shames the name of God, hurts the people of God. Have you felt that way? You feel so hurt. Not revenge, but hurt in your heart. "I'm wounded". Mostly, you just think of the action you want to do to get on that guy, "PC (Paul Choo), he's preaching heresy, fix him. I want you to preach a message to fix him". It's more think: strategy! No, no, no, feel: "I am hurt".

Let's look at Jeremiah 10:19. This is just to help you get us in the mood, in the right ambience for Jeremiah.

Woe is me for my hurt! Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is grievous; but I said, "Truly this is a grief and I must bear it."

Hope you're getting a feel of how Jeremiah feels and more importantly how God feels. Look at this word-tears. I was just looking at the concordance; five times in this book: tears, tears, tears. How many of you have shed tears when you read the word of God, when you saw the name of God hurt by people, when the Israelites or whoever, blaspheme the name of God, have you ever shed tears? Have you shed tears when people mocked the name of God, when Christians' testimonies are terrible, thereby they mock the name of God? How have you felt? I've hardly seen Christian leaders shed tears. I've seen them preach passionately, I've seen them preach brilliantly, accurately, but tears? Rare. Honestly, on the pulpit, 40 years as a Christian, I can count by the fingers of one hand.

So I hope you see a little bit now of how we should approach Jeremiah. I'm laboring this because I know this will be a struggle. I read a book and it says that no modern Prime Minister of Israel would ever win an election if he is unable to cry at the grave of a fallen Israeli soldier. The Jews have always believed that it's very important to be able to cry, up to today. The Jews say "It takes a real man to cry". So obviously, we don't have a lot of men in the pulpit today, in the ministry today. We have scholars, boy

scholars: never matured, the heart never grew. Their head outgrew the heart. So, have you ever shed a tear for the things of God and the people of God? So different! We spend all our time on the episodes, which you have to use a lot of your mind and we spend so little time on books like Jeremiah and the next one, Lamentation. The Song of Solomon: most Christians say, "I never read that book. It's weird. I feel strange when I read those books". They are honest, very honest. Most Christians would be ashamed to cry. Well, let's hope this book will help us. So, I want you to feel.

As I listened and listened, several times, listened in just the last two days to the whole book of Jeremiah, the word "anger" came up, over and over. So I looked into a concordance, about 35 times, the word "anger" came up. And the word "fierce anger" came out, eight times. It's something else that I want you to know, that's an emotion too. Just like hurt, anger is an emotion. I want you to see and understand this emotion of God called anger. For many of us, anger is a negative thing. It's a result of impatience of, maybe, immature frustration with things. It results in something uncontrolled, ugly. But I want you to know that the anger of God is God's love against evil. Listen carefully. The anger of God is beautiful, because it shows His heart of love against evil. If you love someone and you see evil being committed against him, or by him, would you just ignore it? You love your son and you see evil influence, evil actions on him and you keep quiet, is that love for your son? If you see evil actions from him, are you going to keep quiet? Is that love? When you see the anger of God, I hope you see the love of God against evil for you because He loves you. You must understand the anger of God is not uncontrolled. Jeremiah: this book is 1000 years of patience of God, it's not impatience. It's not wild outbursts; it's measured, measured love in action, as God deals patiently but firmly, but measured and fairly. I want you to see, when He took action at the end of this book of Jeremiah, from I think chapter 46 to 51, every nation that had taken advantage of Israel, every nation, one by one, tiny little nations we don't even know of, God takes action against them. One by one, one by one, measured nicely, faithfully. So I hope when you see the word, "anger of God" 35 times, the "fierce anger of God", you see something about God. He loves us. A lot of times, we say we love somebody, we love and that guy does wrong; "I don't want to do anything. Why should I? It's just too much trouble telling him he is wrong". I see other preachers preaching against the truth of God, taking God's name in vain. Do I really want to get myself into trouble? I mean, if they hurt, that preacher hurts other Christians, too bad for them. Does that show my love for them? Or would my love be

shown if I prayed about it, measured my anger, holy anger, and then spoke up against that false preacher to protect the innocent from his lies, which is love. You see, we just don't have enough love to have anger. That's the truth. There is not enough love. Anger is a product. God's anger is a product of His love. It's a necessary reaction of a holy, loving God against evil. Otherwise He is not God, otherwise He is not holy and righteous. Otherwise He is not a loving God if there's no anger. I hope you get this. Because people always have this wrong idea of anger, seeing anger as a negative trait out of a bitter, petty heart. Not true.

Another word I want to bring up is “judgment”. I look at the concordance too: 23 times, thereabout, roughly, I don't bother to count right down to the detail; this book is not about details. This book is to give you an overview. A lot of people come and say, “PC (Paul Choo), you said this, you said that, you know, it should be this, it should be that”. I say, “Yes, yes. I accept that”. I do make mistakes in the details. I hope I don't make mistakes in the big picture because this is what this book is about. So when people see the word “judgment”, it's like, “Oh, God judge us, we're in the deep trouble and that's not good. That's not good. If God blesses us - good, God judges us - no good. Nonsense, they are both the same thing. Both are a product of His faithfulness. And He said, “If you obey, I will bless. If you disobey, I will judge”. And when He does both of them, it's the result of the same faithfulness to His word. So, when you see God judging, as He promised He would, as He told them in Sinai, “If you do this, I will do this to you”. And He does it. So when you see judgment, don't see the negative side of God. See that His judgment is nothing more than His faithfulness to His word. He keeps His word whatever. People may forget, He does not.

So, I hope we see this: whether you see anger, and judgment, you see a lot of it in this book, I hope you see the heart of God, the love of God, the faithfulness of God. I'm sorry I'm laboring this because I feel this is something that is needed.

At the end of all this, I want you to look at Jeremiah 29:11. When you get to the little details, you lose track of the big picture. I want you to see Jeremiah 29:11:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you", said the LORD, "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end".

In the midst of all these and our little petty negative minds, remember what God says, "My thoughts of you are for your good". That's all I want, like a father.

So I hope this is something that we can get into and wrestle with. Many people say, "Oh, Pastor, the Old Testament is full of anger and wrath. Thankfully, the New Testament is so different from the Old Testament. It's all about grace". I want you to know, the character of God never changes. The God of the Old Testament is still the God of the New Testament, and will be the same God of the New Heaven and the New Earth. He never changes His character, His love, His faithfulness, His Holiness. Never! But our understanding of Him grows, thankfully. And like a child, ask any child, he senses the anger of his father, the rules of his father, far more than he senses the love and goodness of his father. I guarantee you that. And then as the child matures, it gets better. One day that little child grows up to be a father. And I think at that point, he finally begins to understand that the love of his father was not seen by him in his childhood. I hope you get it. If you don't see the love of God, you haven't grown up, spiritually.

The children of Israel were children. I hope in the New Testament, we become adolescents, growing up. I hope and believe in the New Heaven and New Earth we finally enter, become adults with understanding. The character of God does not change. It's our understanding that has evolved. So as we see this book, children of Israel had understanding like a child, plenty of laws have to be given to them, plenty of scolding have to be given to them. And then when you come to the New Testament, like a little boy, growing up, we see, "Ah, now I'm getting some things".

So you see the word "wrath", it's in the New Testament. Paul uses the word "for the wrath of God". Revelation, John, "the fierceness of the wrath of God". It's there! Same God. Revelation talks about the New Heaven, New Earth thousands of years later, same character God. People will say, "Oh the Old Testament - all the wrath, no grace". Absolute nonsense. From the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sinned against God, what does God do? God kills the lamb to clothe them - Genesis Chapter 3. That's grace. A lamb killed for you, you sinner! Picture of the grace that will come

in Christ, can't see yet. Adam can see them. Abraham brought up Isaac, about to sacrifice Isaac and God says in Genesis 22, "Stop, I will provide a lamb". Jehovah Jireh provided a lamb. Picture of Christ - grace, grace, grace. Genesis, first book in the Bible. What do you mean there's no grace in the Bible? And then Exodus. God tells Moses build the tabernacle, what's the tabernacle for? Passover, Exodus: "Kill the lamb, put the blood on the door, and I'll pass over". What is that a picture of? Grace of God in Christ, coming one day. They go to Sinai, and God says, "Build a tabernacle". For what? Offerings! Every day, morning and night, slaughter a lamb, blood, slaughter a lamb, blood. What's that for? Pointing to grace, grace, grace, grace from Genesis all the way throughout their existence. The Jews, what do they have? Throughout their existence? The tabernacle, later the temple. What do they see every day? A lamb slaughtered for them for their sins. Grace is not in the Old Testament? It is! Just not seen by them, they didn't get it. Does it mean there was no grace? In the New Testament when we saw Christ, then, I got it. Finally, I see it. It's not a problem of no grace in the Old Testament and grace in the New Testament, it's just that clarity hit. Today you and I can say, "Wow, the grace of God". How many little children can say, "Wow, the love of my father". They will tell you, "My father is very strict, you know?" or "My mother is very strict, she's angry with me again". Can't see! Doesn't mean the father doesn't love his kid, the mother didn't love her kid until the kid got big? Until the kid was 40 years old, then the father loves his kid. Nonsense. In fact, I think the father loves the kid before he was born.

I hope you get the big picture. Grace has always been there in the Old Testament as well as anger and judgment of God. Two sides of God's character: love, love. Anger is part of His love, grace is part of His love. From love comes out these two things, and God is love.

So when you see all these words and you hear them, you begin to see and understand more the character of God because a lot of New Testament Christians like us will say, "Oh God's just like this jolly, jolly Santa Claus: always just blessing prosperity, health, prosperity, health, do whatever you like. Sin as much as you like, it's already settled at the cross. I don't mind, I can just close my eyes to sin, it's already covered at the cross". The penalty of sin is covered at the cross. Listen carefully. The penalty of sin settled at the cross. That, I want you to understand. But if you sin today,

you don't lose your salvation, but you lose your fellowship with God. Just like the day I was born, my father loved me. He could never stop being my father and I could never stop being his son. I was born into his family. Same, when you're born again into God's family, you're always God's. If you're born again, really born again, not think you're born again, you can't lose that but you can lose your fellowship with your Father. And I've lost it many times with my dad when I was disobedient until I said, "I'm sorry, dad".

But today we have a kind of hyper grace, where people say, "Oh, sins settled at the cross, no need to say sorry". Tell that to your father on earth, "Dad, I know you love me, I don't need to say sorry to you". The moron can understand that's most illogical. In fact, as a child you want to say sorry a lot more because you love your dad. Hyper grace? It's not even grace. That's hyper stupidity. And a lot of people believe that, because they want to continue in their sins. Especially the guys who promote that. So they can have plenty of people come, who love to sin, and pay them lots of tithes so they can live their sinful, lustful lifestyles.

Thankfully, not only anger and judgment and hurt in book of Jeremiah, but we come to the beautiful part and I am going to read again what Jeremiah has blessed us with in Jeremiah 31:29-34 In those days, they shall say no more: The fathers have eaten the sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Every man that eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be on edge.

In other words, not so much national judgment: if your nation goes wrong, you pay for it; your father does wrong up for it. But now the clarity that it's me, me, I'm responsible, I'm not a child anymore. I'm adult, I'm responsible.

V32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which by covenant they break, although I was a husband unto them, said the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the LORD. I will put My law in the inward parts and write in their hearts that I'll be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man, his neighbour and every man, his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least

of them unto the greatest of them, said the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I'll remember their sin no more.

So here in the midst of all the judgement, anger and hurt, is a beautiful passage. A peep into the clarity that will come one day on all of us, children of Abraham, children of Israel. What's that? God will put His law in our hearts. In other words, one day we will change, be changed from inside out. You see at Sinai, they didn't have the Holy Spirit. They had the law: do, do, do. And for 1000 years they couldn't. What has that taught us? Without the Holy Spirit, we can't obey the law.

A sinful heart cannot obey the law. And in the Old Testament, only a few people were given the Holy Spirit and not permanently. New Testament: when Jesus rose, He sent the Holy Ghost and now we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, changing us from inside out. And we begin to see things that those in the Old Testament could not accept. A few prophets, at some points of their life, saw the things of God, they understood the things of God because of the Holy Spirit. For them, that clarity about the Holy Spirit was not there. We saw the cross, we saw the Lamb. Then the Holy Spirit, though mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament, they couldn't quite grasp, because they were not given a new heart of understanding. So when you say, "What is our blessing now?" Here! That God would put His Spirit in us and give us a new heart. Heart transplant in the New Testament.

You'll notice that there's another thing about God. I've noticed in Jeremiah and in many of the other books that God tolerates false prophets a lot. He didn't seem to hammer them straight away. Let's see why.

Jeremiah 5:31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests, they rule by their means, And My people love to have it so: and what will he do in the end thereof?

Why does God tolerate false prophets? There seems to be a lot in the Bible. I mean, if someone went in my name, use my name, and say I'm speaking on behalf of Pastor Paul, I'm going to stop him. But God doesn't seem to do that. I think a hint is here: "for they love it". In other words, they get what they deserve. You love to hear lies, go ahead, listen! That's what you want. So God didn't seem to get rid of the false prophets because these people didn't want to hear truth. You will see that many times in the book

of Jeremiah and other books. People love to hear a lie? Really? Who are these people? Wicked fellows? Really the terrible people on earth? No. Let's look at Jeremiah 42 and see an interesting lesson. Let's look at Jeremiah 42:2-3. Let me give you the context. The remnant of the Israelites, after Babylon had come and taken people away and brought them into exile, there was a remnant left. And this remnant, led by their gang leader, came to Jeremiah and said, "Mr. Prophet". They knew he was a prophet, nobody questioned that. So they went to him respectfully and said, "Tell us what God wants us to do".

Jeremiah 42:2-3 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; for we are left but a few of many as thine eyes do behold us: that the LORD, thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

So they came to plead with Jeremiah: "Please ask God to tell you what He wants us to do?" So with sincerity, they went to this man whom they knew was from God and asked for advice. So, Jeremiah gave them certain advice that they should just obey the king of Babylon. And then, after a long chapter of 42 comes chapter 43.

Jeremiah 43:1 And it came to pass that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people, all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, even all these words.
Jeremiah 43:2 Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speaketh falsely. The LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there.

After they begged and said , "Ask God, because we know God speaks to you, tell us", and then when they didn't like what they heard, they said, "God didn't send you". I hope you understand why God allows these things. You really don't want to hear the truth. Why give you the truth? Even if I give it to you, you won't believe. So here's Jeremiah giving it to them but they say, "No, no, that's not what He said to you". Do you realize these were men who did not disrespect God, they respected Jeremiah. Today we are exactly the same. Christians who say the Bible is the Word of God. They say that, they swear by that. And they go to the Bible and read a passage they don't like, what do they do? "Ah, forget this book, let's read the next book". If they don't like the next book they don't like, they find one they like,

“I like this one, this is my favourite verse, my life verse”. Really? You can choose what you like? Imagine your father tells you a lot of things and you say, " Dad, I ignore this, I ignore that but I like this one." Is that even logical. That's Christianity today. That's how we all read the Bible. We go to preachers we like, who have their own favourite angle in the Bible, verses we like and the rest, don't bother. It's really what it is today. That's why I want you to go through the Bible from beginning to end.

When you listen to your Father, I hope you listen to His heart first, then analyse words. I believe if every child when they are scolded by their mom or their dad or whoever, tried to understand the heart behind the words, they will know their mother and father much better. But they take the words only, and for years, they are bitter against their father, “because you said this to me when I was young”. That's Christianity today - analyse the words, ignore the heart of God.

Well, you scholars will say, “I learned nothing from this Bible study”. You are right if you are talking about the brain - nothing! But if your heart has been touched, to feel what God feels, it's worth it all.

The last part of 52 chapters-God talks about King Jehoiachin. 37 years, he was in jail, in exile in Babylon. After 37 years, the king of Babylon in the first year of his reign called Jehoiachin out of the prison, changed his prison garments and invited him to eat at the king's table. What an ending to a book like this! What is it all about? The hope, the hope, that in all the judgment, the love of God is still there, if you can only find it, if you can only sense it. And God said, from his (Jehoiachin's) seed, seed of David, root of Jesse, one day will rise up and be king again - Jesus, King of kings, Lord of Lords, will go on the cross and pay for our sins. I hope that when you read Jeremiah, try to sense the heart of God. And then this book will show you a huge heart of love. May God bless you. May Jeremiah not be boring and depressing, but be the key to know your God, the love of God that passes all understanding.

God bless you