

OpenTheo

Jeremiah 1 - 3



Jeremiah - Steve Gregg

In this study, Steve Gregg focuses on the first three chapters of the biblical book of Jeremiah. He highlights the length of the book and Judah's state of idolatry and apostasy during Jeremiah's time. Gregg explores Jeremiah's call to prophesy and the symbolisms used in his visions, such as the touch of his mouth and the "root pull down, destroy throw down, build plant" metaphor. The study also touches on the theme of rebellion against God and the importance of returning to a reliance on God's living waters, rather than turning to religious systems that lack life.

Transcript

Alright, this morning we're beginning our study in Jeremiah, in chapter 1. And the chapters in Jeremiah are on average longer than the chapters in Isaiah. And yet we really need to cover, on average, four chapters or so per hour. Now that's not really very likely, which means we'll probably spill over beyond our allotted time in the number of sessions for Jeremiah.

But it does mean that I need to move without dilly-dallying. I need to move forward as much as I can. However, the temptation will be to linger long at certain passages because they are so classic, so rich, and so pregnant with information and thoughts that we find in the New Testament that are applicable to us.

And so it's going to be a challenge in a limited time to cover Jeremiah. It is such a great book. But we will begin.

In chapter 1, verse 1, The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah, the son of Ammon, the king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. Now, Josiah, of course, was one of the last, well, he was the last really good king that Judah had.

He was Judah's last chance to recover from the slide into idolatry and into apostasy that

the earlier prophets had complained about and warned about. Isaiah had warned about these things that Jeremiah is going to be warning about. But Isaiah was prophesying during the time of Hezekiah, who was also a good king, like Josiah, a few generations earlier.

But Josiah was the last good king they were going to have, and he was a good one. He found it in his heart to tear down the idols, to desecrate the high places, to get rid of all the occultism in the land that had been introduced by Manasseh, his father and or his grandfather. And he was born during the reign of Manasseh, during the worst time in Judah's history.

And he brought about probably the best reforms that Judah had in the Old Testament times, but they were too shallow to last after he died. His sons, the kings that reigned after him, they just went right back to idolatry. And so in the time of Jeremiah, who was born during the reign of Manasseh, as was Josiah, the two men were probably of similar age, as Josiah sought to reform through his royal decrees, Jeremiah sought to reform through prophesying doom and warning, and reasserting God's rights over Judah, which were being spurned and ignored.

And so he prophesied all the way up until 586 BC, which was the 11th year of Zedekiah. That was the year that the Babylonians came and burned down Jerusalem. And Jeremiah lived longer than that.

We don't know how much longer, but we don't have any real samples of his prophesying beyond that point. And it says here that his prophecies apparently came to an end in the 11th year of Zedekiah. That seems to be the latest point during which he claims to have ministered.

In verse 4, Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations. Now, this idea that God could know somebody before they're born, obviously raises questions about the whole issue of predestination.

He says, I ordained you to be a prophet to the nations before you were even born. Paul said in Galatians chapter 1 that God separated me, he said, from my mother's womb, that he might reveal Christ in me, that he might reveal his grace in me. And certain men, apparently, God has chosen before they were born.

Jesus was, but Jesus wasn't an ordinary man. Jeremiah and Paul were more like ordinary men, but not exactly. They were special men.

They were not like Christ. They were not God incarnate, but they were people with a special calling. And God called Jeremiah to do something that no one else in his day would do.

And he was persecuted. There were apparently very few in the remnant of Israel in his day. We only know of two converts that he had, Baruch and Abed-Melech.

And apart from that, the whole nation seemed to be against him. So he was a unique man in his day, and God had selected him for that purpose. Now, how did God do that? Does God ordain who will be saved and who will be lost? Well, we couldn't read that much into this passage.

We could conclude from this that God knows what people will be like and can make choices for their careers for them before they're ever on the scene. If God knows the future, if God knows that you will be a man or a woman who will serve him, then he can, before you're ever born, select some kind of a ministry for you that he's going to call you into. So this doesn't go as far as some would say.

It doesn't teach that God decides who's going to be a believer and who's not going to be a believer. But among those who are believers and whom he knows will be believers, because he does foreknow, the Bible says, he can make choices. Like when Jesus was in the upper room with the disciples in John 15, he said, you've not chosen me, but I've chosen you and ordained you, that you should go on and bear much fruit.

He's talking about ordaining them to their ministry as apostles. He chose them for that, but he chose them from a group that had already been disciples. They were disciples first, and then he chose them to be apostles.

So the choosing of God to specific ministries is well established in the Old and the New Testament, and that seems to be all that is said here. It does not say that God ordained that Jeremiah would be a believer, though in a time that he lived, there were so few believers. You'd wonder if one could become a believer without God making it so, because it was so unusual for someone to really be faithful to God in his day.

But I believe that God did have a special call on him from before his birth. God did reveal himself to him when he was a youth, as we shall see, he was a youth at this time, and Jeremiah was a soft-hearted fellow. He cried easily.

He felt the pain that God felt, and he felt the pain of his people when he contemplated the terrors that were coming upon them. And so he was a tender soul, and God revealed himself to him, and perhaps those things in themselves would go a long way to guaranteeing his coming around and being a follower of God. We don't know what all was involved in God making Jeremiah into a prophet after he was born, but God knew before he was born that this was a man he was going to call and use.

He says, Now, we don't know how old Jeremiah was when he was called. He only said he was a youth, but we know that he prophesied for more than 40 years, and unless he lived to be a very ancient man, he must have been probably under 20 when he was

called, and probably a teenager then. There are a number of people in the Bible who are called when they're very young like that.

David was obviously anointed when he was a young man. It would appear that Stephen in the New Testament was a young man. It doesn't say anything about his age.

It's just that that's sort of a tradition that he was a young man, possibly in his teens, and so God doesn't necessarily call the older men. Timothy was a young man, and Paul said, Don't let any man despise your youth. When people see a young minister, of course they wonder, What does he know? He hasn't been around long.

He's still wet behind the ears, and yet if God calls him, like Paul says, don't let anyone despise or look down on the fact that you're young. The real issue is whether you have the word of the Lord or not, and Jeremiah was given the word of the Lord, and he says, Therefore, don't complain that you're young. Your authority doesn't come from your age and your experience.

Your authority comes from the fact that you will speak whatever I command you to speak. You will speak my words, and I'll be with you. They will not be able to kill you.

Now, they will try, but God says, I will be with you to deliver you, he says, and Jeremiah really needed that because he was attacked. There were plots on his life, and he was even imprisoned, and there were people who wanted him to starve and die there, but God did preserve him. Though God delivered him, he didn't make it easy.

God did prevent his enemies from silencing him, which is all that really God's promising here, but he didn't have an easy life. When God delivers you, it doesn't mean he gives you necessarily a bed of roses, and Jeremiah didn't have one, a bed of roses. It says, Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

See, I have this day set you over nations and over kingdoms to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. Now, touching his mouth is symbolic of giving him the words of God. Isaiah had a somewhat similar experience in Isaiah chapter 6 when God said, Who will go for us? Isaiah did not consider himself qualified.

He said, I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. And a coal was taken from the altar by one of the seraphim, and he touched Isaiah's mouth, and said, Okay, now you're purged. Your lips are purged.

Now you can speak for me. This physical contact with the mouth in a vision was a symbol of opening the mouth with the anointing to speak God's words. And he says, I've given you authority over kingdoms and nations.

Now, of course, he didn't have any kind of a political authority at all. And those who did

have political authority usually didn't listen to him. But he was nonetheless the agent of God who is over the nations and authorities.

And he spoke denunciations and predictions which the nations would have to succumb to. They would not have any power to escape the decrees that he would make. So, in a sense, he was over them.

And his ministry was to root out, to pull down, to destroy, and to throw down. Those are all destructive. Those are all demolition.

And then to build and to plant. The imagery of building and planting are very common metaphors in Scripture and in the New Testament, too. Remember, Paul was talking about the work he and Apollos had done in the church of Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 3, he said, He said, I planted and Apollos watered and God gave the increase. And then he said to the church, For you are God's field, you are God's building. So, a field and a building.

Seen as a field, Paul says, I planted the seeds, Apollos watered them. Seen as a building, he says, I as a wise master builder, according to the grace of God given me, have laid the foundation. Another builds on it.

Seen the church as a field growing or a building under construction, the laborers, like Paul and Apollos, are doing different parts of the project, but causing it to grow, causing it to, the building to go up. Paul did the early work, planting the seeds, laying the foundation of the building. Other workers came to Corinth after Paul was gone.

They watered the seeds he had planted and began to grow. They built on the foundation that he'd laid. So these images are used for Jeremiah, also God's workman.

He's going to build and plant. He's going to, by his words, initiate something new. It won't happen in his lifetime, but he's going to make predictions about that.

And his words, because they are God's words, will necessarily come true. So he is planting the seeds of a new order. He's going to plant the seeds of a new covenant order that he will be predicting.

But that will come at the expense of the old order. There's going to be a tearing down of the old, an uprooting of the old trees. Remember Jesus said when the disciples came to him and said, do you know the Pharisees were offended by what you said? He said, every plant that my father's not planted is going to be plucked up by the roots.

And so the old order has got to be uprooted. Whatever's built there has got to be demolished. And there's going to be a new building.

There's going to be new growth. And Jeremiah is going to be there to announce and to

predict those things. As the world, as he knows it, is going down.

But there will be in his visions that he will predict a new world, a new covenant. That he will talk about in chapter 31, chapter 33 really. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me saying, Jeremiah, what do you see? And I said, I see a branch of an almond tree.

Then the Lord said to me, you have seen well, for I am ready to perform my word. And the word of the Lord came to me a second time saying, what do you see? And I said, I see a boiling pot and it is facing away from the north. That is, it's facing southward, about ready to tip toward the south and spill out that direction.

A boiling cauldron. Then the Lord said to me, out of the north, calamity shall break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. For behold, I'm calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord, and they shall come, each one set his throne at the entrance to the gates of Jerusalem against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah.

I will utter my judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken me, burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. Therefore prepare yourself and arise and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them.

For behold, I have made you this day a fortified pillar and an iron pillar and bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you. Now there's two visions that he has.

One is of an almond branch and the other is a cauldron. It's up in the north, ready to tip southward and spill out to the south, apparently over from the area of Syria down into Israel and Judah. Now the almond branch receives very little explanation, and it's perplexing.

I don't know of anybody who reads it who doesn't come away from it saying, what, why was that even there? What's that about? There is a play on words between the almond branch and what God actually says about it. In verse 12 he says, you've seen well, for I am ready to perform my word. The word ready in the Hebrew is watching, and the word almond in Hebrew means watchful or wakeful.

It was the first tree to blossom in the spring after the winter had passed. It was the first harbinger of new growth and of something that was coming after the trees had all been barren during the wintertime. When spring was coming, the blossoms would first appear on the almond tree.

And so seeing the almond branch means there's something coming soon. It's an early

warning of something. And God says, I am ready or watchful to perform my word.

It seems to be that he's saying that Jeremiah's message is going to be an early warning to Judah about something that's about to take place, like the almond is an early warning of spring coming on. It's hard to get any more information or use out of this particular image of the almond, but it is, like I say, a play on words that God is ready to do something. This is something that's just something is beginning to happen immediately or soon.

And this is a forewarning of it as the blossoming of the almond is that there's more life coming. There's more going to be seen. God's going to be doing more things in the later spring as other plants grow.

So this is the first thing he's doing, and it's a harbinger of things that are coming. Now, as far as the cauldron, obviously the cauldron is tipping toward Judah. It's going to pour boiling whatever its contents are, boiling broth, boiling molten whatever.

We don't know what's in the cauldron, but whatever it is, it's boiling. It's hot, it's liquid, and it's being poured toward the south, which will come down upon Judah, and this is explained somewhat more than the earlier vision. It says out of the north country there's going to be breaking forth on all the inhabitants of the land, that is, the land of Judah, and he says all the families from the north are coming down.

Now, the families would not really be like we think of families, mothers and fathers and children. It just means races from the north, different races of people conjoined with the Babylonians, people who have already been conquered by Babylon and now are part of their armies, coming down to conquer Jerusalem. And God says this is because Jerusalem has rejected all my judgments, and they've burned incense to idols, and they've rejected me.

Well, that's sort of what they've done almost through their whole history. But he's saying now is the time that's about to tip. It's reached the tipping point, and the cauldron is about ready to turn over, and this judgment is coming from the north.

Now, Babylon was largely to the east. Babylon was northeast, as Assyria was from Jerusalem, but they always spoke of the coming of the Assyrians and the Babylonians as being from the north. The reason is it was more convenient to invade Israel from the north.

If you came from the east, you'd have to cross the Jordan River, not a big obstacle for modern armies, but if you've got a lot of military equipment and so forth, a major river is not the easiest thing to ford, and yet they wouldn't have to. They could just go up around the headwaters of the Jordan up to the north and just come down without obstacle from the north, and so that was the typical thing. The armies like Assyria and Babylon would

first conquer the regions north of Israel, and they'd just come on down from there.

So even though Assyria and Babylon were more east than north, they were always attacking from the north, and they're always described as the northern people or the north people coming from the north. And so God tells Jeremiah at the end of chapter 1 that the people will fight against him. Now, the people fighting against him are not going to be the Babylonians.

They're going to be his own people, as we shall see. The Babylonians actually were friendly to Jeremiah because they knew that he was... Well, Jeremiah was not exactly on their side. Jeremiah was on God's side, but he eventually was telling Judah to surrender to Babylon, which was a message that the Babylonians appreciated, and the Jews did not.

And so his opposition was not going to come from the Babylonians. The Babylonians were coming against his nation, but his nation was going to turn against him, and they would not prevail against him because God would be with him. Chapter 2, This is back, of course, immediately after the Exodus, when God brought them out of Egypt and he brought them to Sinai, and they agreed to be married to God.

They agreed to the covenant relationship between themselves and God at Mount Sinai. And he talks as if that was a very tender thing, a very sentimental moment for him. Actually, they weren't all that faithful even then.

As we know from reading Exodus, they actually made a golden calf while they were still at the mountain. And even when they traveled through the wilderness with him, they grumbled more often than not, or maybe not more often than not. Maybe they only grumbled the times we read about.

Maybe most of the time they were faithful. It's hard to know. In any case, even when they were grumbling, they were following, and they were leaving behind their old familiar home in Egypt.

For hundreds of years, they and their ancestors had lived in Egypt, and now they were going off on a new adventure with God, like a bride leaving her home and going off with her new husband. And God's reminiscing about that. So I remember in the youth of your nationhood, when we first were betrothed, when we first got married, that you followed me into the wilderness.

Israel was holiness to the Lord, the first fruits of His increase. All that devour Him will offend. Disaster will come upon them, says the Lord.

That is, God's attitude toward them at that time was, anyone touches my bride, I'm going to deal harshly with them. I will defend and vindicate my wife, as any virtuous man would do. Of course, the contrast is, in Jeremiah's day, God's disowning the wife, and

He's actually allowing people to come and destroy her.

Babylon will do so, but that's because He's divorcing her. As we shall see in chapter 3, He'll mention that. He's divorced her.

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord, what injustice have your fathers found in me, that they have gone from me and have followed idols and have become idolaters? This is really the searching question. I remember when I first was a young Christian, and I saw some of my friends backsliding, and I remember reading this passage and thinking, boy, that is the question, isn't it? What have these people found wrong with God? I don't get it.

These people who aren't following Jesus, who a year ago were singing His praises and saying, He's the Lord, He's the Messiah. What, did He stop being the Lord? Did He stop being the Messiah? What happened to them? Why aren't they following Him anymore? Did they find something wrong with Him? Obviously, the answer is no. What injustice could you find with God? What has He ever done wrong? That when a person follows God for a while and then falls away, you've got to wonder, what was that about? Why were you following Him if He wasn't real? Did you think He was real then? Why do you think He isn't now? Did you think He was good then? Don't you think He's good now? What has changed in God? God doesn't change.

It's people that are fickle. And that's what God is saying, What is it that I did to make you stop having those affectionate feelings toward me? What is it that made you turn to other gods? What made you cheat on me, in other words? We were married, and you went after other gods. That's adultery.

You've become idolaters. What have I done to deserve that? And neither did they say, Where is Yahweh, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness? In other words, they forgot that He delivered them from Egypt. They just went after other gods and ignored the God who saved them.

Who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through the land of drought and the shadow of death, through the land that no one crossed and where no one dwelt. I brought you into a bountiful country to eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination, priests did not say, Where is the Lord? And those who handled the law did not know me.

Those who handled the law would be the priests. So those are parallel statements. The priests who handled the law, they didn't know God, and they didn't seek God.

They didn't say, Where's the Lord? We need to find God. They were religious professionals. They were supported by the ministry.

That's what priests did. They were full time in the ministry, and they were paid from the

tithes of the Levites, and the Levites were paid from the tithes of the people. So they were professionals, but they didn't know God, and they didn't care to.

They didn't even wonder where God was. They weren't looking for God. They were just comfortable in their profession.

The rulers also transgressed against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after the things that do not profit. Now one thing we're going to see in Jeremiah, he does this a lot, is he breaks the population down into categories, as he first does in chapter 1, verse 18.

Notice the last several lines of verse 18. It says, Against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people. Now he often breaks down the population into these different groups.

The priests are usually mentioned. The kings or the princes are usually mentioned. Prophets are usually thrown in the mix, but they're not there in chapter 1, verse 18.

But very commonly he'll say, the princes, the priests, the prophets, the people. It's only an accident of English language that those all start with P. It sounds like a good preacher's alliteration, but I'm sure in Hebrew it doesn't have the alliteration that it does in English. But you're going to find again and again, the princes, the priests, the prophets, the people, or some combination thereof mixed together.

And what he's saying is the problem is a top-down problem. The princes and the priests, the ones who are the leaders of the country, the political and religious leaders, even the prophets who are supposed to be, more than the priests even, the charismatic mouthpiece of God. All these people are corrupt, and therefore the people of the land are also corrupted.

But when these lists are given, almost always it is the princes and the priests who top the list of offenders. And we see that in 2.8. The priests did not say, Where is the Lord? Then halfway through the verse, the rulers also transgressed. And the next line, the prophets prophesied by Baal.

We'll see this list very commonly throughout the book of Jeremiah. Therefore I will yet bring charges against you, says the Lord, and against your children's children I will bring charges. Now what's that mean, I'll bring charges against your children's children? Well, they were going to go into Babylon, and at least three generations would be impacted by that.

Their children and their children's children who would be born in Babylon would know only exile, would only know bondage, and only separation from their promised land. This is really the fulfillment, I believe, of what God threatened when he gave the Ten Commandments, and he gave the command against making graven images. He said, For

I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers against their children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

What he's saying is if you make idols and serve other gods, a judgment will come upon you that will impact up to the third and fourth generation of your offspring. And that is what happened when they went into Babylon. They were there 70 years.

At least two generations, if not three, were impacted. The generation that went in of adults, possibly their children that were alive at the time, and a couple more generations of kids born then in Babylon. So I'm bringing charges not just against you.

The penalty is going to come upon your children and your children's children as well. Verse 10, For pass beyond the coast of Cyprus and see, send to Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there has been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But my people have changed their glory for what does not profit.

Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. Be very desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Now he's saying this is something that's really not known anywhere else in the world except Israel. And that is every nation had their national gods as Israel had theirs. But the other nations remained true to their gods century after century.

You never find a time when the Moabites rebelled against Chemosh or the Egyptians against Ra or the Babylonians against Bel or the Phoenicians against Baal or the Canaanites against Molech. They love those gods. So how come Israel's the only nation that doesn't stay true to their god for more than a few days at a time and they wander off after other gods when in fact Israel has a real god who actually delivered them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness and protects them and made promises to them like no other god can do.

And the gods they run after are not real gods at all. Why don't these other nations leave their gods? Well, I think the answer, of course, is, although it's not stated here, the other gods don't make such moral demands upon their people. The pagan gods are worshipped with drunken orgies.

Really, that's what the pagan religion was, basically drunken orgies in front of an idol. That was attractive to carnal people. God's people knew of God, but in their hearts they were carnal.

God had not yet written his laws on their inward parts, as Jeremiah says later in chapter 31, verse 31 and following, that God is going to do in the new covenant. The old covenant introduced them to God but did not incline them to God inwardly. And therefore they were still attracted to all the carnal things that the other gods offered.

But still, it's an astonishing thing when you stand back and think about it. What's up with that? Israel's the only nation that had a real god, the real god, and yet they departed from God every time they turned around. And every time he took his eyes off them, they were gone.

And yet the other nations don't have real gods and they stayed loyal to them generation after generation, century after century. That's what God is pointing out. Who's ever heard of a nation leaving their gods? What other nation has ever done that? And their gods, he says, aren't gods.

Be astonished at this, oh heavens. Be horribly afraid. He says, my people have done two things wrong.

They've abandoned me, the fountain of living waters, and the other thing they did wrong was to replace me. Now they had me providing continual provision for them. They had a relationship with me and others.

They didn't just meet me and that was, it was all over, but I was with them, continually among them, like a flowing stream, continually coming out of the ground to provide fresh water all the time. But they've gone to these idols, and that's like digging cisterns or reservoirs for water. Cisterns were dug in rock usually in those desert areas.

It's hard to keep water from evaporating and from dissipating into the soil, but if they found a rocky area, they would carve out of the rock a cistern because the water wouldn't penetrate and disappear into the soil if it's rock. But sometimes rocky areas have crags and cracks that they can't patch. And the cisterns are essentially broken and the water leaks out anyway.

And God said, you people have made cisterns for yourself. You could just have the springs of fresh living water in relationship with me all the time, but instead you've chosen religious systems that don't have any life in them. You try to satisfy your thirst from them, but the water leaks out of them.

They're broken cisterns. They're inadequate. You've left what is real, satisfying, and God's provision, really, for you, and you've substituted that with that which is not satisfying and can't really continue to provide anything for you.

The cisterns are broken. They can't hold water long term. And this is really what I think the church often has done in modern times.

I think probably the turn that we see to psychology and to worldly ways of ministry and worldly ways of worship, borrowing from the world, its ideas is a departure from the purity of what God has set up, which the church has had available to it since the time of Jesus. And when I think of people with life problems running off to therapists or something, when the early Christians had to run to Jesus, early Christians had to get help

from God because there weren't therapists. There weren't these cisterns to drink from.

They had to drink from Jesus or they'd just have to go thirsty. But Jesus was enough. Jesus was adequate for the early church.

Now Christians don't even hardly know Jesus. If they have typical problems that the Bible calls sin in their life, they don't go to Christ for deliverance. They go to some human source who employs human means.

It says in Psalm 1,1, Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. But most of the Christian psychologists and Christian therapists have studied, if they've studied counseling at all, they've studied under secular teachers. Or even if they went to a Christian college, insofar as they're employing secular psychology dressed up in Bible verses, it's still the ideas of men who were not godly people.

Freud was not godly. Jung was not godly. Carl Rogers was certainly not godly.

Abraham Maslow was no godly man. He was an atheist. Jung was an occultist.

Freud was an atheist. Anti-Christian, sworn to destroy Christianity from his youth. I mean these people who are the founders of the systems that Christians are going to for help in their lives, these are people who never knew God.

And although Christians are now teaching these theories of Freud and Jung and Carl Rogers and so forth, in the Christian colleges, and Christians learn counseling from Christian teachers, there's still the counsel that came not from God but from these men who were in the dark. They're trying to satisfy the thirst of the soul of people whose lives are not full and not stable and not as they should be. And earlier Christians would have had to go to God for that.

And they would have found in God the fountains of living waters. But God's people seem to always want to go to that which is inferior when they have the God of the universe available to them. That's something that is astonishing.

Let's be astonished, oh heavens. How could God's people do those things? When you think about it, it just doesn't make sense. And that just shows that people, although we are the rational species, are not anywhere near as rational as we should be.

We can be, but we seem to put rationality aside and just go for, I guess, what appeals to our emotions or to our lusts or to our shallowest thinking. But if you think about it, God is enough. God always promised that he would be enough to his people.

And people depart from him and they go to human innovations to drink and satisfy themselves. It says in verse 14, Is Israel a servant? Is he a home-born slave? Why is he plundered? The young lions roared at him and growled. They made his land waste.

His cities are burned without inhabitants. Also the people of Naf and Taphenes, these are Egyptian cities, Naf is Thebes, I believe, have broken the crown of your head. Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God, when he led you in the way? Now, I don't know what events are referred to when the people of Naf and Taphenes, the Egyptians, have broken the crown from their head.

This could have been written after Josiah died. There's no date attached to this prophecy, but Josiah died in battle against the Egyptians. He was the king, the crown.

So, one could argue that when Pharaoh Necho killed Josiah in battle, that this was the Egyptians breaking the crown off the head of Judah. That might be what's referred to here. We don't know the timing of this prophecy, but if it was late enough, if it was after the death of Josiah, that would probably be what was alluded to.

Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God, when he led you in the way? And now, why take the road to Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or why take the road to Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that you have forsaken the Lord your God, and the fear of me is not in you, says the Lord God of hosts. For of old I have broken your yoke, and burst your bonds, and you said, I will not transgress.

This was, of course, at Sinai. God said, will you do these things? And they said, we will do all that the Lord said. We will not transgress.

He had broken their yoke, that is, he had freed them from slavery, and they said, we'll obey you now. That's what they said at Mount Sinai. When on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down playing the harlot, yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality.

He's no doubt alluding to what his earlier contemporary in Jerusalem, Isaiah, had spoken of when he was referring to the vineyard. In Isaiah chapter 5, he says that he planted a choice vine in a fruitful hill, referring to the founding of Israel in the land of Canaan. And that's what he's referring to there, the choice vine.

They were a noble vine, the seed of highest quality. That is, if you look at the seed, which was Abraham himself, he was a man of high quality, a loyal man, a man who stood every test to his faith, a man who lived over 100 years walking with God and never deviated from obedience to God. He wasn't a perfect man.

He had his moments of fear in where he compromised the safety of his family and things like that, but he was a man who, when God told him something, he believed it and followed it. He didn't have as much revelation from God as we do, but he was loyal to everything God told him, even to the point of offering his son Isaac when he was told to

do that. That was the seed of highest quality that that vine came from.

How then have you turned before me into a degenerate plant of an alien vine? For though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me, says the Lord God. This is perhaps contrasting from Isaiah chapter 1, where God said, come and let us reason together. Isaiah 1.18 Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. No matter how stained you are with your sins, God can make you white and clean again. God is able to purge that sin completely, but when you use your own devices, you can use as much lye and soap as you want to.

Your iniquity is marked. You're not going to be able to wash it away. Only God can make you white as snow when you're polluted with sin.

Now verse 23, how can you say I'm not polluted? I've not gone after the bales. See, your way is in the valley. Know what you have done.

You are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways, a wild donkey used to the wilderness that sniffs at the wind in her desire. In her time of mating, who can turn her away? All those who seek her will not weary themselves. In her month they will find her.

Now he's saying that his wife Israel has become more like a donkey in heat, a female donkey in heat or a female camel in heat. That all the males seek her at her time of heat and she seeks them. She's out sniffing the air, sniffing to see where the males are.

She's out looking for lovers is what he's saying. He's comparing his wife Israel to an unclean animal at mating season who just wants to have a lot of sex. In other words, for them having a lot of sex meant worshipping a lot of gods because the metaphor is of he's their god, their husband.

She's the wife, but adultery for her means worshipping other gods, other husbands than her husband. And so he's just talking about how promiscuous Israel is with reference to seeking many gods, worshipping many others than God. Withhold your foot from being unshod and your throat from thirst.

But you said there is no hope for I have loved aliens and I will go after them. But as a thief is ashamed when he is found out, so is the house of Israel ashamed. They and their kings and their princes and their priests and their prophets.

There's a bunch of those people again. Saying to a tree you were my father and to a stone you gave me birth. He's talking about a carved tree carved into an idol or a stone carved into an image claiming that this stone or this tree has somehow created them when God is the one who created their nation by bringing them, birthing them out of

Egypt.

They have turned their back to me and not their face, but in the time of their trouble they will say arise and save us. That is they'll ask God to save them. They give credit for their existence and they worship false gods, but they will turn to God, the real God, when they're really in trouble.

But where are your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise if they can save you in the time of your trouble. For according to the number of your cities are your gods O Judah. He says that numerous times that according to the number of their cities are their gods.

There's a lot of cities in Judah. They have as many gods as they have cities is the criticism he's making because they shouldn't have even more than one at all, but they have a different god for every city. Why will you plead with me? You all have transgressed against me, says the Lord.

In vain I have chastened your children. They receive no correction. Your sword has devoured your prophets like a destroying lion.

O generation, see the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness to Israel or a land of darkness? Why do my people say we are no more to you? Can a virgin forget her ornaments or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number. He says he is like the ornaments and the attire of a bride.

She's clothed in him. A bride is of course dressed in her most beautiful clothing and ornaments on her wedding day and it is her pride. It is her glory.

The way she's dressed and everyone who talks about how beautiful the bride is and God is the ornament and the pride of Israel and yet they've forgotten. A bride would never forget her ornaments and yet the people have forgotten God. It's interesting, verse 30 says, in vain I have chastened your children.

They receive no correction. It's obvious that chastening, even when it's done by a wise father, doesn't always bring about reform from children. Parents do not have absolute control over how their children turn out.

In Isaiah chapter 1, God complained. He says, I've brought up and reared children and they've rebelled against me. And yet there can't be a better father than God and now he's chastened them.

That refers to his parenting techniques but they have not responded. It's a scary thing to think that God could apply chastening to us in the hopes of getting us to go a certain way and we could fail to be reformed by it. It means that we suffer all the things necessary to make us good but we don't become good.

We suffer in vain. All the sufferings that God allows into our lives, the trials, are intended to be reformatory and help us grow and make us strong and correct us and just make us more Christ-like. That's what trials are permitted for.

It's awful to think that you could go through such trials and never become more Christ-like. You never get the advantage. Just pay the price.

And yet that's what rebellion does. You're going to get chastened. You're going to have trials.

You can reform or not. If you reform, then you will benefit from the trials. You will gain the advantage of them.

If you rebel, well, then you'll still suffer. You'll still pay the same price. You just won't have anything to show for it.

Paul said that to the Galatians when he wrote to them. He says, Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it is in vain? He says, I fear that I've labored among you in vain. And yet, he says, you've suffered so many things but apparently have not gained anything by it because they didn't go forward.

They went backward into error, into heresy. But, just the concept of someone being chastened, it's painful to be chastened. It says that in Hebrews chapter 12.

No chastening at the time seems joyous but grievous. But afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it. That's good.

It's good if you're chastened and it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness because you've been exercised by it. But, if you are disciplined and it's grievous but you never yield any fruit, then you've just paid a price for a product you didn't get. And you didn't get it because you didn't respond.

We are supposed to respond in a certain way to God's chastening and God's trials. And if we do, there will be an advantage to us and God will get what he wants too. Otherwise, it'll just be wasted suffering.

There's a book written by Paul Billheimer back in the 70's called Don't Waste Your Sorrows. I never read the book, but I just from the title I could sort of imagine what it was about. It's a great title.

Don't Waste Your Sorrows. If I had written a book by that title, I know what I would have said. I don't know what he said, but it seems like that's what this is.

These people were experiencing sorrows. They're experiencing suffering. They're experiencing chastening.

But it's all wasted because they didn't turn to God in it. They didn't respond to God. In vain, I've chastened your children.

They received no correction. We will have sorrows, whether they're productive or not, but they will be wasted if we don't use them to become more godly. Why do you beautify your way to seek love? Verse 33 says.

In other words, why are you out there trying to seduce other gods, other men? Still using the imagery of his wife cheating on him. Therefore, you have also taught the wicked women your ways. Also, on your skirts is found the blood of the lives of the poor innocents.

I have not found it by secret search, but plainly on all these things. He's talking about the fact that they actually sacrificed their infants to Molech in the reign of Manasseh. And he's saying these innocent children, their blood is all over your clothes.

And I didn't have to sneak into your house when you weren't there and look in all the secret hiding places to find the evidence of your guilt. You just wear it on your clothes. You're not even ashamed of it.

I didn't have to do any kind of secret search for it. It's just plainly, you advertise it, that you're killing these innocent children. You're not ashamed of it.

Yet you say, because I'm innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. That is, the Jews were thinking that because they were God's people, and they were certainly ignoring the fact that they were not innocent, therefore they felt that God would protect them from the Babylonian threat that was looming. We read this again in Jeremiah chapter 7, how they thought because they had the temple in Jerusalem, God would not harm them.

As long as the temple was there. They were putting their trust in things that were not God himself. The temple, it's like in 1 Samuel, when the people lost their first battle with the Philistines, they said, let's go get the Ark of the Covenant.

It'll save us. And they took the Ark of the Covenant out, like the Ark is going to save them. Trusting in religious things instead of in God himself.

They weren't right with God, but they thought that that'd be okay because they had the Ark. They weren't right with God as a city. They were in rebellion, but they had the temple there, so God would of course save the city because of that.

People putting their confidence in religion and in religious things rather than in recognizing that their security is in a real relationship with God and living a righteous life, which they were not doing. They talk as if God is on their side. You say, because I'm innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me.

Behold, I will plead my case against you, God says, because you say I have not sinned. Why do you gad about so much to change your way? Also, you shall be ashamed of Egypt as you were ashamed of Assyria. Indeed, you will go forth from him with your hands on your head, for the Lord has rejected your trusted allies and you will not prosper by them.

It's referring to the fact that Judah at certain points in time looked to Assyria and to Egypt as confederates against other foes. In the days of Ahaz, he actually hired Assyria to rid him of the danger of Syria and Ephraim that were combined to try to overthrow him. Instead of looking to the Lord, like Isaiah told him to, Ahaz actually paid off Assyria to come down and strike Syria and Israel and get them off his back.

So, they trusted in Assyria. At other times, in the days of Hezekiah, there were people trusting in Egypt, sending gifts down to Egypt saying, come help us against the Assyrians. He's saying, you're not going to... you'll be ashamed of having trusted in these, Assyria and Egypt, instead of in God, because they are going to be defeated by Babylon too.

Assyria was defeated first. Three years later, two, three years later, Egypt was defeated by Babylon and then Judah would be defeated by Babylon as well. So, in other words, your trust in Egypt and Assyria will be something that will bring you to shame because they themselves are going to be defeated.

You will not prosper by them. God has rejected your trusted allies. You're going to go off into captivity along with them with your hands on your heads.

That is probably, you know, in a position of surrender to the Babylonians. In chapter 3, they say, if a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again? Would not that land be greatly polluted? That's a quotation from Deuteronomy chapter 24. Now, remember in Jeremiah's day, Josiah or somebody, Hilkiyah the priest, found a copy of the book of the law in the temple, which had been long forgotten and brought it to Josiah.

Apparently, over a whole generation, the priests themselves had forgotten what the law was. It was just sort of in a musty old storage bin somewhere in the temple. And as they were renovating the temple, they ran across it and opened it and said, whoa, what's this? And scholars believe that what they found was a scroll of Deuteronomy.

There are some very good reasons to think so. Jeremiah was living at a time where this scroll was rediscovered. And here he quotes from Deuteronomy 24, a passage that neither he nor anyone else would be familiar with unless they had found Deuteronomy, this passage about divorce.

Later on in chapter 11, there will be quite a few indications that Jeremiah is alluding to

the book of Deuteronomy as something that the people are now going to be held accountable to. So, it would appear that the book that Josiah discovered, or that his priest discovered, was the book of Deuteronomy, and this must have been written after the discovery of that scroll because Jeremiah quotes from it. They say, if a man divorces his wife and she goes and becomes another man, she cannot return to him again.

It would defile the land. That's what Deuteronomy says. But, God says, but you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return to me, says the Lord.

Now, he's either saying, I'll make an exception in your case. Generally, if a man divorces his wife, she can't come back, at least if she's married to someone else. But I want you to come back.

And you have committed adultery. Now, it is the case that God has divorced her. It says so later in this chapter in verse 8. It says, Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel, actually, that's the northern kingdom, not Judah.

So, it says he had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce. I guess, technically, he had not yet divorced Judah. He does say he had divorced Israel, but Judah is not divorced yet.

And so, the law does not forbid her to come back to him. She's had many lovers. She hasn't remarried because she's still married to God.

But she's in danger of divorce if she doesn't come back, but he's calling her back. He says, If I do divorce you, I won't be able to take you back. That's what the law says.

But you have not yet been divorced. You have been unfaithful. He does say to them in verse 14, Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you.

And so, it sounds like he may be saying, the divorce has not yet taken place between me and you. I have divorced your sister Israel to the north. And you are going the same path she did.

And if I do divorce you, I will not be able to take you back. So, come back now while you can, before it's too late. Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see.

Where have you not lain with men? He means slept with, worshipped other gods. The imagery of an adulterous wife. By the road you have sat for them like an Arabian in the wilderness.

Meaning an Arabian prostitute. And you have polluted the land with your harlotries and your wickedness. Therefore, the showers have been withheld and there has been no latter rain.

And you have had a harlot's forehead. You refuse to be ashamed. A harlot's forehead just

means that she's brazen.

She's got a hard countenance. She's not ashamed of her adulteries. Will you not from this time cry to me, my father, you are the guide of my youth? Will he remain angry forever? Will he keep it to the end? Behold, you have spoken and done evil things as you were able.

The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king, have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? This means the northern kingdom which was now gone. He's just reminding them of what happened to the northern kingdom, Israel, that had been conquered by Assyria previously. She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree and there she played the harlot.

And I said, after she had done all these things, return to me. But she did not return and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce.

Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear but went and played the harlot also. So Judah was watching on as Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians and they were destroyed because of their unfaithfulness to God. But says Judah didn't learn the lesson.

They saw what God did in divorcing Israel and now Judah has pursued the same course and is courting the same disaster. It says, and yet for all this her treacherous sister has not turned to me with her whole heart but in pretense, says the Lord. This sounds like it was during Josiah's reforms.

It does say it was in the time of Josiah in verse 6. It must be during the early stages of his reforms or maybe in the later stages Judah had turned to God in pretense. As he's saying, there is some outward show of reformation here which no doubt Josiah was sincere about but the people were not they just followed what the king ordered. They didn't really have a heart for God.

They haven't turned to the Lord with their whole heart only in a shallow way. Then the Lord said to me, backsliding Israel, the northern kingdom, has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Now why? Really Israel was not more righteous than Judah except that Judah had less excuse and that therefore Israel might be somewhat less guilty because Israel did not have a precedent when they were destroyed.

They didn't have a precedent of God having destroyed another nation for what they were doing so they were a little more ignorant than Judah. Not entirely ignorant. They had prophets telling them they were doing the wrong thing but Judah actually saw that God would keep his threats.

He would make good on his threats. They saw, Judah saw that Israel did experience a

divorce from God and therefore they were less ignorant. They had more responsibility to respond to that warning and they didn't.

So Judah's responsibility is greater and Israel's somewhat more righteous than Judah in that respect. Go and proclaim these words toward the north and that would be toward Israel from Judah's standpoint and say, return, backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall on you for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord, your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree.

And you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord. Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family.

I will bring you to Zion and I will give you shepherds according to my heart who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Then it shall come to pass when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days, says the Lord, that they will say no more the ark of the covenant of the Lord. It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made any more.

Now, this is a messianic passage. It's talking about when a new covenant will have come. Now, Jeremiah has not used the term new covenant yet.

He will later. Here he talks about the ark of the covenant, which is the emblem of the old covenant. He says the day will come when the ark of the covenant will be obsolete.

People will be worshiping God, but they won't be visiting the ark of the covenant. They won't be remembering the ark of the covenant. It's the old things that are not to be remembered.

Isaiah said, do not remember the former things, but remember the new thing I'm about to do. And he's talking about the new covenant as opposed to the old covenant. They're going to forget about the ark of the covenant in the new covenant day.

And yet, the context is where he's talking about how Israel, the northern kingdom, has been destroyed. And they had been dispersed. And by this time, they had been absorbed in the pagan races.

They had intermarried and so forth by this time. There really was no people of Israel in the north. And yet, he symbolically speaks toward the north where that destruction has taken place and says, come on back to the Lord.

Now, this would be, of course, figurative because there was no nation there to come back to the Lord. But the idea was that even though God had judged his people, he would still take any remnant of them that would return to him. And that's what he says.

I will take you, one from a city and two from a family. It's not going to be all Israel coming. It's going to be a remnant that will come.

And that's what, of course, Isaiah said in Isaiah chapter 10. He said, though the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant will be saved. And Paul quotes that in Romans 9 with reference to Jews becoming Christians.

Only a remnant of the Jews are being saved in Christ. God is bringing only one from a town or two from a family to himself. He's bringing them to Zion.

And this Zion, of course, is the spiritual Zion that Isaiah spoke so much about. This is the Zion of the new covenant. This is the church.

He says, I'll give you shepherds. Verse 15. Who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

This is a reference, of course, to better spiritual leaders than they had. In chapter 34 of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 34 2. God denounced the leaders of Israel as shepherds who were not feeding the sheep.

They were feeding themselves. In Ezekiel 34 2. God said, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, thus says the Lord God to the shepherds, woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves.

Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? The shepherds are the spiritual leaders of the church. In the New Testament, Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus, shepherd or feed the flock of God which is among you. In Acts 20.

Verse 28. In 1 Peter 5 2. 1 Peter 5 2. Peter's talking to the elders of the churches, he says. To the elders of the churches, he says.

Feed the flock of God or shepherd the flock of God which is among you. Jesus told Peter in John 21. 17.

Feed my sheep or feed my flock, my lambs. The Christian leaders, the apostles, the elders that they appointed, the leaders of the churches, their assignment is to feed the sheep. The leaders of Israel were supposed to tend the sheep too, but they fed themselves.

Unfortunately, in the institutional churches, sometimes there have been leaders who fed themselves. We think of the priests and the bishops in the Middle Ages who just made themselves rich at the people's expenses. And they didn't really spiritually nurture people, they were just maintaining their own jobs.

And living rather plush lives. Shepherds that were feeding themselves, not feeding the flocks. But God says, if you return to me in this new community that is married to God,

this new covenant community that doesn't have the Ark of the Covenant anymore, it's the new Zion that a remnant of Israel will come into.

They will have shepherds that will be good shepherds. Shepherds that will feed you with knowledge and understanding. And those are the ones that God has appointed.

Jesus appointed his disciples to feed the sheep that way. And the disciples appointed the elders and such. That's what church leaders are to do.

They're supposed to teach and feed with understanding and knowledge. It says in verse 17, At that time, Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it. Again, this is an image that Isaiah depicted a number of times, especially in Isaiah 2, where the mountain of the Lord's house is elevated above all the nations, and all the nations flow into it, and they learn His ways.

They have shepherds who teach them with knowledge and understanding. They say, let us go into the house of the God of Jacob and there He will teach us His ways, and we will learn them and walk in them. That's what is the same season that is described here.

The present age, where the Gentiles are coming to the God of Israel, to the Messiah, and learning to walk in His ways. Jesus said, Go to all the nations and teach them to observe all things I've commanded you. That's the commission of the church.

And that's what is described here. The nations are learning to do what Jesus commanded. He says, all the nations shall be gathered to this Jerusalem, to the church, the spiritual Jerusalem, to the name of the Lord.

To Jerusalem they shall walk no more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers. This is, of course, a spiritualized spiritual promised land.

Spiritual Israel joined together in the land that God provides. There's certainly a confirmation that this is spiritual in Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews 11 chapter 13 is talking about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And it says, these, in verse 13 of Hebrews 11, these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the land or in the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly, if they had called to mind the country from which they had come out, they would have opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better, that is a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, and He has prepared a city for them, a spiritual city, a heavenly

country. It says that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were really looking for something beyond the earthly land of Canaan.

They were looking for a heavenly country. And so the land that I have given as an inheritance to the fathers here in these passages about the Messianic Age is a spiritual land, a heavenly country. Now verse 19, quickly.

How can I put you among the children and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, you should call me my father and not turn away from me. Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, says the Lord. A voice was heard on the desolate heights, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, for they had perverted their way, and they had forgotten the Lord their God.

Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Indeed we do come to you, Jeremiah, apparently speaking as an agent for the remnant, praying as they should. Indeed we do come to you, for you are the Lord our God.

Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of the mountains, which is where the high places were and they worshipped the other gods. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel, for shame has devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, the sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our reproach covers us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

So, this final section of chapter 3 is Jeremiah kind of giving Israel an opportunity to know what it is they're supposed to be saying. This is the kind of prayer you should say. It's sort of like leading someone to a sinner's prayer.

You know? The appeal is repeatedly made, return. In verse 12, return to me. In verse 22, return, you backsliding children.

And we're going to see it again in chapter 4, verse 1, return to me. The invitation is there for them to turn back and save themselves from the disaster that's coming. And if they don't know how to do that, Jeremiah gives them a model prayer.

Here's kind of what God's looking for you to say. And those are the words of Jeremiah. In verses 22 through 25.

Well, we're out of time, so we'll take our break, and we'll come back to chapter 4.