

# OpenTheo

## Jeremiah 14 - 16



### Jeremiah - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses Jeremiah chapters 14-16 which concern droughts and sin. He highlights the consequences of sin, as God remembers iniquity and punishes sins. Gregg also draws parallels with Isaiah's prophecy and crimes in Jeremiah's time. The text talks about the impact of drought on deer and their young, referencing the lack of food and grass in the fields.

### Transcript

Alright, we're starting again now at Jeremiah chapter 14. Jeremiah 14. It says, the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts.

There have been a couple references earlier to the fact that the rains had been withheld. It's actually stated to be the judgment of God against Judah that the early and the latter rain had been withheld from them. This is one of the things that actually Deuteronomy chapter 28 had predicted, that if they were under the curse, God would make the heavens like bronze.

That means impenetrable. No rain would come down from there. And the ground would become like iron from lack of rain.

And so apparently these droughts had begun to be felt in Jeremiah 3.3. It says, therefore, after cataloging the idolatrous rebellion of Judah, it says, therefore the showers have been withheld and there has been no latter rain. And also over in chapter 5 and verse 24, it says in verse 23 actually, but this people has a defiant and rebellious heart. They have revolted and departed.

They do not say in their heart, let us now fear Yahweh our God who gives rain, both the former and the latter in its season. And in other words, they are deprived of rain, but it never occurs to them to turn back to God who is the one who gives rain, as they should. They could have rain again if they turned back to God who gives the rain, but it says that never occurs to them to do that.

So we can see from these earlier just passing comments that Judah was experiencing

drought and it was concerning that drought that this prophecy is given in chapter 14 of Jeremiah. The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought. Judah mourns and her gates languish.

They mourn for the land and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. Their nobles have sent their lads for water. They went to the cisterns and found no water.

They returned with their vessels empty. They were ashamed and confounded and covered their heads because the ground is parched for there was no rain in the land. The plowmen were shamed.

They covered their heads. Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field, but left because there was no grass. As they left their young, there's no sense nursing this fawn since there's really no food.

The mother herself can't even expect to survive. So she abandons her young. That's how bad it's gotten.

The wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights. They sniffed at the wind like jackals, sniffing to see if the wind will carry any indication of water in some distant place that they could go to and find. Their eyes failed because there was no grass.

Oh, Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do it for your name's sake. For our backslidings are many. We have sinned against you.

Oh, the hope of Israel, his savior in time of trouble. Why should you be like a stranger in the land and like a wayfaring man who turns aside to Terry for a night? Why should you be like a man astonished, like a mighty one who cannot save? Yet you, oh, Lord, are in our midst and we are called by your name. Do not leave us.

Now, this is Jeremiah probably expressing emotion more than maybe more than inspiration. He's saying, Lord, you really should save us. You are dwelling among us.

You know, you should be basically acting on our behalf, not make yourself a stranger. Of course, that's just desperation crying out. Jeremiah knows very well that it's not God who has made himself a stranger.

It's the land that's made him a stranger to them. And so he's just desperate. I mean, you have to realize that when the land was suffering drought, Jeremiah lived there, too.

He wasn't taking showers. He wasn't watering his lawn. And in all likelihood, he wasn't drinking enough water either because it was probably rationed.

There just wasn't much water. So he's suffering all the same discomforts as everybody else is from this drought. And we are not in that condition.

It's hard for us to put ourselves in that condition, perhaps. But if you're ever in that condition, you do start whining a little bit. Well, maybe you do.

You don't have to, but probably your inclination will be to do so. And he's saying, come on, God, why aren't you sending us rain? Jeremiah knows the answer to that. He's just ventilating his discomfort and his concern.

And he sees not only himself but others, even wildlife, suffering the effects of the drought. Thus says the Lord to his people, thus they have loved to wander. They have not restrained their feet.

Therefore the Lord does not accept them. He will remember their iniquity now and punish their sins. Now, remembering their iniquity is basically parallel to punishing their sins.

He'll remember them against them and punish them. I bring this up because later on in a much more well-known passage in Jeremiah 31, 34, where he says, I will remember their sins and iniquities no more. What he means is not that he'll literally forget them, but rather that he will not punish them anymore, that he will not remember them against them.

He will not hold them against them. Here we have the expression, he will remember their iniquity now, but later in the new covenant, Jeremiah says that God will not remember their sins and iniquities anymore, but he's referring to punishing them, not actually having a mental lapse. Verse 11, then the Lord said to me, do not pray for this people for their good.

This is the third time we've seen this command given to Jeremiah. When they fast, I will not hear their cry. As Isaiah 58 was talking about, Isaiah 58 said, the people say we fast and we cry out to God, but he doesn't answer us.

And of course, Isaiah pointed out the same things were going on in his day, the same crimes and same complaints that God had as in Jeremiah's day. He says, I won't hear them when they fast and when they cry out to me, when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them, but I will consume them by my sword, by the famine and by the pestilence. Then I said, oh, Lord God, behold, the prophets say to them, you shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.

Now, Jeremiah is complaining about these false prophets. It's so frustrating when you know what God said and you know the people are hearing misrepresentations of God's word. The false prophets are giving people encouragement in the way that they are going wrong.

And Jeremiah knew these people needed to hear a different message, but what could he

do? He couldn't silence those prophets. He just had to sit by and listen to them lie to the people. I mean, he could say, hey, they're lying, but he couldn't stop them from lying and he couldn't stop the people from believing the lies.

I imagine there's times when you probably feel that way when you hear maybe television preachers or just you go to a church and it's a watered down message. It's a prosperity message. It's your best life now message kind of thing.

And you say, God, all these people, they're hearing the wrong stuff. And you think if they could only hear the right stuff, it would be such a difference in the Christian church. You know, the situation, the religious situation in America would be so different if all these preachers were preaching truth instead of what they're preaching.

Because look how many people are listening to them. It's frustrating. You think, you know, how many people will I ever be able to reach? Not very many.

Not very many people were listening to Jeremiah. The ones who did could get it right, but it's not a large enough minority in the population to really save the nation. And that's a frustration I'm sure many people feel today who are very much aware of what the Bible says and very much desirous to hear the truth preached.

And yet you hear the media and the big churches and all the preachers that are really, they really have the ear of the masses. And they're saying things that are lulling people to sleep and continuing to encourage them in their carnal paths and their carnal desires and so forth, rather than calling them to repentance. And, you know, the false prophets, Jeremiah says, God, these people are being led astray by these false prophets, as if to say, what am I supposed to do? What will you do, God? Will you stop these false prophets? And verse 4, he says, the Lord said to me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name.

I have not sent them, commanded them or spoken to them. And I'm not responsible for what they're saying. This isn't my fault.

I didn't send them to say these things. They prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing and the deceit of their heart. Now, this seems to answer a question that we might have had about false prophets.

Were these guys knowingly deceiving people or were they deceived themselves? Were they just charlatans? And we wonder this sometimes about some of the false ministers, too, out there. Do they know they're lying? Are they charlatans just trying to bilk the people? Or do they actually, are they actually mistaken themselves? Do they think this is the gospel? Do they think this is that they're doing ministry the way they should? In the case of the false prophets in Jeremiah, Isaiah, they were prophesying out of the deceit of their heart. That is, their own hearts were deceived.

It was divination. Divination. They're putting their confidence in divination, which was probably reading things like, you know, chicken gizzards and tea leaves and things like that.

You know, just the occultic practices of fortune telling, which they should have known better than to do, but they were doing those things and had been deceived by them. They were seeing a false vision. They had a vision, but it was false.

And they were deceived. Their own hearts were deceived. They're speaking out of the deceit of their own hearts.

That is the deceived condition of their own hearts. Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name whom I did not send and who say sword and famine shall not be in this land. By sword and famine, those prophets shall be consumed.

Now, when God says that he's going to judge those prophets who prophesy in his name, but who were not sent by him, this suggests that they are taking the name of the Lord in vain. He didn't send them. They're not speaking in his name.

They're just saying they are, which, of course, reminds us that it's possible to claim to be doing something, even claim to be praying in Jesus name. And you're not really doing it. You're using the name verbally, but you're not really doing anything in his name.

You're acting in your own interests and attaching his name rather improperly to a prayer or to actions that aren't really what he would do, not really acting as his agents. And so these prophets, they use Yahweh's name, but they weren't prophesying in his name. He hadn't sent them.

Therefore, they weren't his agents. They falsely used his name. By the way, there are, I don't believe there could be real prophets.

I mean, I do believe in the gift of prophecy. I mean, the Bible doesn't ever suggest that the gift of prophecy would be taken away from the church. And therefore, I believe there can be true prophecy.

But there are certainly people who call themselves prophets and the Lord did not send them. And they're not prophesying the word of the Lord. Many times what they prophesy is quite contrary to scripture.

And I think of these verses and think God's intolerance toward these false prophets would have to apply to them as well. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword. They will have no one to bury them, nor their wives, their sons, nor their daughters, for I will pour their wickedness on them.

Therefore, you shall say this word to them. Let my eyes flow with tears night and day and let them not cease for the virgin daughter of my people. Another of the frequent references to his weeping over them, the weeping prophet.

For the virgin daughter of my people has been broken with a mighty stroke and with a very severe blow. If I go out in the field, then behold those slain with a sword. If I enter the city, behold those sick from the famine.

Yes, both prophet and priest go about in a land that they do not know. So there's a lot of people slain in the city, a lot of people slain in the field, and there's people gone into captivity like the priests and the prophets in a foreign land. Have you utterly rejected Judah? Has your soul loathed Zion? Why have you stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good and for a time of healing and there was trouble.

This last four lines is repeated from an earlier statement of the same words in chapter eight and verse 15. We looked for peace, there was no good. We looked for a time of healing and there's trouble.

And again, healing here as in Isaiah is not talking about individuals seeking their diseases healed. It's talking about the nation needing healing, needing peace. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness.

Now who we are, I don't know. Isaiah is obviously speaking for himself. Maybe he speaks for a small, you know, fellowship of faithful people that he's with, or maybe he's speaking hypothetically.

This is how he says, this is my prayer, and I hope there's others thinking this too. But he says, we acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you. Do not abhor us for your name's sake.

Do not disgrace the throne of your glory. Remember, do not break your covenant with us. Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Remember, this occasion of this prophecy was during the droughts and it was about the droughts.

He's saying, you know, none of these other gods can cause rain. So don't abandon us here. We need that.

Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, O Lord God? Therefore we will wait for you since you have made all these, as you've made the rain, you've made the showers. You're the one that we have to wait on to receive the rain. Sadly, although Jeremiah's prayer was sincere and maybe there were others with him, the nation's sins were too great and therefore the answer did not come.

In fact, that is apparently what chapter 15 continues on to say. God answers him and

says, though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be favorable toward this people. In other words, Jeremiah is coming before God, maybe a few others too, interceding for this nation to be spared, for rain to come and for God to turn his wrath away.

And God says, sorry, Jeremiah, even if Moses and Samuel were standing in your position making intercession, I couldn't be favorable toward you. I couldn't turn this around. Now, Moses and Samuel, of course, were famous for not only being leaders of the people, but great intercessors for the people.

Moses interceded for the people at a time when they had made the golden calf. And God said to Moses, I'm going to wipe these people out. I'm going to make another nation from you and just I'll make a greater nation than them just from you.

And Moses interceded and said, well, then what will the nations think about you, God, if you do that? They're going to think you brought these people out to the wilderness to slay them because you couldn't bring them into the land. And this will look bad for you, God. Your name will be besmirched.

And so God accepted that intercession and he didn't judge Israel on that occasion. At least he didn't wipe them out. Likewise, Samuel interceded for the people at a time when the Philistines would have destroyed them.

And because of his intercession, the Israelites, who were greatly outclassed by the Philistines militarily, nonetheless drove the Philistines out more or less permanently because of Samuel's intercession. So Moses and Samuel had a track record of being able to prevail with God to prevent him from bringing deserved judgment on the people. Now, Jeremiah was trying to, in a sense, play that role, trying to intercede and have the effects of judgment rolled back on behalf of Jeremiah.

And I think God's saying to Jeremiah, don't take it personally, Jeremiah. It's not you. But even if it was Moses or Samuel, I wouldn't be able to answer this.

These people are too far gone. He said, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of my sight and let them go forth.

And it shall be, if they say to you, where should we go? Then you shall tell them, thus says the Lord, such as for death, you go to death, such as for the sword, to the sword, and such as for famine, to the famine, and such as for the captivity, to the captivity. Now, there's mention of death, sword, and famine. Seems like famine and sword are means of death and would not be differentiated from death.

But you may remember that in Revelation, when the fourth seal is broken and the fourth horseman comes out, it says a fourth of mankind was killed by the sword, by famine, by

death, and by wild beasts of the earth. And death is used actually as a substitute for the word pestilence there. Because Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 21 lists four things which God says, these are the four severe judgments that I bring upon Jerusalem.

And he named them, sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts of the earth. Revelation chapter 6 names these four things, but in place of the word pestilence puts the word death. And I mentioned when we were talking about Revelation that the Septuagint actually uses the Greek word death, thanatos, more than 50 times in translating the Hebrew word pestilence.

Now this verse is not one of those cases. In this case, the Hebrew actually uses the word death, but the point is that the word death and pestilence seem to have overlapping meanings in the mind of the Jew. And it's probable that death in this verse is more, a more narrow category than just the whole category of death, because it would then certainly overlap with the sword and the famine.

And I think there's a distinction made. Some are, you know, to death. I think would be, some are pointed to pestilence, some to the sword, some to famine, and some to captivity.

Captivity in this case replaces the beasts of the earth in Ezekiel's list. And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction. Now this is sort of like the four severe judgments of Ezekiel 14, 21, only it's not quite the same list.

It says the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. So Manasseh is dead at this time.

And even if this is very early in Jeremiah's ministry, that is if it's during the reign of Josiah, there's been two kings since Manasseh and Ammon and Josiah. And yet what Manasseh did was so devastating to the culture and to the religious mood of the people that they never recovered from it. It's because of what Manasseh did that these things are going to happen actually decades after Manasseh was gone.

One ruler can damage a country for generations to come. That's one of the reasons I think that many people in America see the current administration as so crucial, maybe more than at most times, because there are certain decisions that a sitting president or Congress can make, which can undermine the foundations of the nation for many years to come. And in particular, of course, there's a real struggle over whether the Constitution is going to be upheld by the next administration or it's going to be trashed, as it has been in some measure in the present administration.

And so the bad deeds of one ruler can affect the nation even several rulers later. You



throw out certain fundamental things and then the next rulers can't fix it. It's just a damage that's been done that can't be undone.

Hezekiah's son Manasseh was like that. Hezekiah was a good king. His son was the worst king.

Manasseh's grandson was a really good king, Josiah, but he could not undo the damage. All that Josiah could do was too little, too late, because although Josiah was sincere, he was working with a population that was addicted to sin and addicted to idolatry. And so no sinner had he died, but they reverted back to all the bad things again.

And so Manasseh was the one who really kind of catches the blame for this, what he did to Jerusalem or in Jerusalem. For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who will bemoan you? Or who will turn aside to ask, How are you doing? You have forsaken me, says the Lord. You have gone backward.

Therefore I will stretch out my hand against you, destroy you. I'm weary of relenting. And I will winnow them, which is the separation of wheat from chaff, with a winnowing fan in the gates of the land.

I will bereave them of children. I will destroy my people, since they do not return from their ways. Their widows will be increased to me more than the sand of the seas.

This is ironic, because of course that term, like the sands of the seashore, referred to population, was first uttered to Abraham, who was told that his offspring would be more than the sand of the seashore. Well, they have become that, but Jeremiah says now God's going to make their widows that numerous. I mean, it's a blessing to have children as numerous as the sand of the seashore, but to have widows that many is just the opposite.

It's as bad as can be imagined. That means all their men that are dead and leave their wives widows are too many to count. I will bring against them, against the mother of the young men, a plunderer at noonday.

I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them suddenly. She languishes, who is born seven. She has breathed her last.

Her son has gone down while it was yet day. This is a figure of speech. Her son has gone down while it was yet day means her life was extinguished when it wasn't really the end of her life.

Sun usually goes down at the end of the day, not in the midst of the day. People usually die at the end of a lifetime, not in the middle of a lifetime. This hypothetical woman is one who was earlier blessed with seven children, but now not so much.

The nation is under judgment and her life ends even in childbirth. She breathes her last. She has been ashamed and confounded, and the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword before their enemies, says the Lord.

Now Jeremiah at this point briefly bemoans the day of his birth. He's going to do so in more detail in chapter 20. He's starting to feel like it'd been better for him not to be born.

Why? Well, of course, he's living in horrible times. In Isaiah chapter 57, verse 1, it says, The righteous perishes and no one pays any attention, and they don't consider that the righteous man is being taken away from the evil to come. That is, the man who died in Isaiah's day could be considered fortunate because he's been mercifully taken away from disastrous times that are coming.

Jeremiah wasn't so fortunate. He lived during those times, and he kind of wished he didn't. He wished he hadn't been born.

He's not asking to die, but he's kind of wishing he'd never been born. He's not so happy to be alive at such times. No one would be.

There's times when it's just not, it's hard to be thankful to be alive. And more than that, he not only lives in disastrous times, suffering all the same deprivations of food and water and all those things that his countrymen are suffering, but he also is suffering persecution and misunderstanding and undeserved hatred from his brethren. This is just not a good life for him.

He says, Woe is me, my mother, that you have borne me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth. In other words, I end up being at odds with everybody. It's not like I have a choice in the matter.

I've got to stand for what I believe, but the problem is I'm living in a culture that believes something different, a culture that doesn't want the truth, a culture in which when you stand for the truth, you're in contention with everybody. That's not a nice place to be for a peaceable man. Some people apparently like contention, but good people don't.

Good people like peace. And he says, How come my whole life is strife and contention? Well, of course, he could stop that if he doesn't prophesy anymore. And at one point he actually decides he won't.

We will see that in a later chapter, chapter 20, verse 9. He says, Then I said, I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name. It's just getting him into too much trouble to give these oracles. I guess I'll just quit this ministry.

I'm done here. But he says, But his word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones. I was weary of holding back.

I could not, as I couldn't be silent. And perhaps you've known that phenomenon. You feel like, you know, I shouldn't really say anything here because, you know, it's not going to go over well.

You know, this is just going to cause people to hate me, people to judge me, people to think I'm a judgmental evil person. I just better not speak up. But as it turns out, you just can't hold it in because it has to be said.

And that's where Jeremiah was at. He said, I'm a man born to contention and strife. I'd love to kind of just go live in a cottage in the wilderness and not have this strife.

I'd love to be able to hold it in and not speak it. But it burns in me and it breaks out of me because I know too much to be quiet. And therefore I'm forced to be a man of strife and contention in the earth.

I have neither lent for interest nor have men lent to me for interest. Notice I haven't cheated anybody. I haven't even borrowed from anyone.

I'm not indebted to anybody. But every one of them curses me. The Lord said, surely it will be well with your remnant.

Surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you in the time of adversity and in the time of affliction. Now, God makes, apparently, Jeremiah this promise that you do have a pretty bad situation, but actually you'll have some advantages when the enemy comes. Instead of wiping you out like the Babylonians are going to do to the general population, I'm going to make the enemy be friendly toward you.

And he did. Jeremiah was not one of the casualties of the invasion. Can anyone break iron, the northern iron and the bronze? Your wealth and your treasures I will give as a plunder without price because of all your sins throughout your territories, he says to the nation.

And I will make you cross over with your enemies into a land which you do not know. For a fire is kindled in my anger which shall burn upon you. Then Jeremiah prays, O Lord, you know, remember me and visit me and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.

This is his strongest imprecation. He says, do not take me away in your long suffering. Know that for your sake, I'm sorry, this is not as bad as a later one in chapter 19 or 18.

This is one of his imprecations. He says, do not take me away in your long suffering. Know that for your sake, I have suffered rebuke.

Your words were found and I ate them. And your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. For I'm called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.

I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice. I sat alone because of your

hand for you have filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will you surely be to me like an unstable, unreliable stream as waters that fail? Now he says, God, you know me, I'm different than the others.

I didn't sit with the assembly of the mockers. I had to sit alone. Sometimes when you're not going to sit with the mockers, you're going to have no company.

You'll be alone. You have to take a stand by yourself. That's, of course, a reference to Psalm 1. It's not the only reference to Psalm 1 in Jeremiah.

There's a much clearer reference in chapter 17, verses 7 through 8. But this is also a reference. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. He says, I didn't sit in the seat of the scornful.

I didn't sit in the assembly of the mockers. I'm supposed to be blessed, but it doesn't look very much like a blessing. I'm sitting alone.

Everybody else is in that assembly over there with the mockers, and I'm not sitting with them. I'm sitting over here on a bench, eating my bag lunch with no friends. How come I'm all alone like this, and everyone wants to hurt me? He says, when he says in verse 16, your words were found and I ate them, probably your words were found is a reference to the finding of the scroll.

That when the Deuteronomy scroll was found and was publicized by Josiah, Jeremiah was delighted. He received it with joy. He devoured it.

It was like food to him, like a treat to him. Your words were found and I ate them, and your word was to me the joy and rejoice in my heart. This is unlike the rest of the nation who found it to be burdensome, and they did not want to keep it, although the king Josiah made them do so.

They outwardly did, but it was not in their heart. They drew near with their mouth, but not with their heart. Jeremiah says, I was all in.

My heart was in it. It was the joy and rejoice in my heart, because I'm yours, and you're mine. I'm called by your name.

I was different than these others. In verse 18, why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable? It's like, I can understand why the nation's got an incurable wound. I can understand why they're not receiving any healing.

They're turning from you, but I'm turning to you. I'm on your side. I'm one of the faithful remnant.

Didn't you say in verse 11, surely it will be well with your remnant? Isn't that me? How come I have these incurable wounds and I'm not healed? It seems like you're not being fair with me. It seems like you're not being faithful with me. It should not be thought that this is teaching that God is unreliable or unfaithful.

This is how Jeremiah feels. He's pouring out his complaint, as the psalmist sometimes do similarly. Therefore, thus says the Lord, if you return, then I will bring you back, and you shall stand before me.

This is apparently God's answer to Jeremiah himself. Okay, you're kind of drifting here. You're drifting into doubt about whether I'm reliable or not.

You need to come back to where you normally stand. You've got to return to a stronger support of where I, of my word and of my faithfulness, and not be intimidated by the loneliness and the isolation and the persecution. Come back to where you were standing before, and I'll bring you back, and you'll stand before me.

That is, once again, you'll stand as my servant to the people. If you take out the precious from the vial, you shall be as my mouth. Let them return to you, but you must not return to them.

That is, you're sitting alone from the scoffers. You don't go into their assembly. Let them come to you if they want to.

Let them come and hear the word of the Lord. You don't go and join them. That's the assembly of the mockers.

There may be some precious in there. There may be some of the remnant in there. Let them come to you.

You don't go looking for them in there. You'll take from among the vial ones, you'll separate out the precious ones, the remnant. He says in verse 20, and I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall, and they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I'm with you to save you and to deliver you, says the Lord.

Now, that's, of course, a repeat of what he said to them when he first called them in chapter 1. He made exactly the same promise to them in chapter 1, verse 18. So he's reaffirming that promise. And perhaps in a way of saying, don't you remember I said this with the subtext of, and isn't it true? They haven't defeated you.

You're not dead. They've plotted against you, but they haven't defeated you. You're not in jail.

You're not dead. Didn't I say that I would protect you from them? And look, hasn't it happened? I will deliver you from the hands of the wicked, and I will redeem you from

the grip of the terrible. And this did happen multiple times.

Jehoiakim imprisoned him in a pit, but he got released. In chapter 26, there was an attempt on his life, but he got released. And so on more than one occasion, the men of Anathoth plotted against him, and God let him know about their plot.

So he escaped death and imprisonment a number of times. And this is God's deliverance from the hand of the wicked. He said, I said, I'd do it, and I will do it.

Now, chapter 16, we find that Jeremiah is going to have to live out his message in a painful way, as the prophets often did. Isaiah had to walk around naked for three years. That'd be embarrassing.

Hosea had to marry a woman who was going to be a heartbreaker to him. That was painful. But God sometimes, when he calls a man to prophesy, which is a great privilege, also there's a price to it.

He not only has to suffer persecution from those who reject his prophecies, but even hardship of acted prophecies, where he often has to play a role to illustrate his point, which is costly to him. Ezekiel had to do this many times in many ways. So does Jeremiah here.

And the role he has to play is that of one who does not get married. He has to never get married or have children. The word of the Lord also came to me, you shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.

For thus says the Lord concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them, and their fathers who begot them in this land, they shall die gruesome deaths. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like the refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth.

For thus says the Lord, do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them. I have taken away my peace from this people, says the Lord. Loving kindness and mercies, both the great and the small shall die in this land.

They shall not be buried. Neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. Nor shall men break bread in the morning for them, to comfort them for the dead.

Nor shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for the father or their mother. That is when their father or mother died, there's not going to be anyone there to console them. Now, this is the first reason he's told not to get married.

There's a second, which we'll soon read of. But he's told not to get married or have children because wives and children are going to be, suffer gruesome deaths in the near future. You'll be happier without one.

You may be lonely now, but you'll be bereaved if you get married and have children. Remember, Jesus said when he was talking about the fall of Jerusalem, similar thing. Blessed are those who have never born children and the breast that never gave suck.

Same idea. When there's such a Holocaust going on, it's a whole lot nicer not to have your heart wrapped up in the welfare of your family. I mean, if you have a family, you have to.

If you have a family, you've got to care. And if you see your wife or children slaughtered before your eyes, or die of starvation, or their corpses out laying on the ground being picked up by vultures, there can hardly be anything worse than a human being can go through. Jeremiah's been spared that.

I don't want you to have to go into the house of mourning. Now, Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 24, was given sort of a similar kind of prophecy. It had to do with his wife.

He was married. Ezekiel was. But his wife died when Jerusalem was besieged.

Ezekiel and his wife lived in Babylon. But the day that Jerusalem was besieged in Jerusalem, his wife in Babylon died. And he was told, don't mourn for her.

Now, this was in order to convey the idea that Jerusalem was God's wife. Ezekiel was playing the role of God, and his wife, Jerusalem, had died just as Jerusalem was taken that same day. And God was not going to mourn for Jerusalem because they deserved it.

And Ezekiel was supposed to illustrate that by not mourning for his wife. Jeremiah is told also, I don't want you going into the house of mourning. But this time it's sparing Jeremiah.

I mean, it must have been extremely hard for Ezekiel to follow those instructions. Your wife dies and you're not allowed to mourn. That'd be extremely difficult for that prophet.

Jeremiah has a slightly easier problem. He doesn't have the consolations of a family, but he also will not even be tempted to mourn because he won't have a family to lose. He won't have a wife to show mourning toward.

And that's a little bit easier. But there's another reason he's told not to marry. And we see that in verse 8. Also, you should not go into the house of feasting to sit with them to eat and drink.

For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I will cause to cease from this place before your eyes and in your days the voice of mirth, the voice of gladness, the

voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride. In other words, all these signs of mirth and of celebration and happiness are being, the city's going to lose them all. I don't want you to have a wedding.

I don't want you to be celebrating because this is something that the city's going to be deprived of. It's inappropriate for you to go and have a celebration like you would have if you got married. Because I, I don't want you celebrating at a time when the nation is about ready to lose all causes and all signs of mirth and, you know, weddings are going to be a thing of the past here.

The voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride are not going to be heard here anymore. And therefore, your abstinence from marriage will prevent you from having to go and celebrate and act all happy when you know the disaster's coming. It'll also be your not being married will be an emblem of the fact that nobody's going to be getting married.

That the voice of all celebration at weddings is going to come to an end because of the disaster in the earth. Now it's interesting that Jesus said with reference to something, I believe it's with reference to his second coming, that it'll be like the days of Noah was. The people before the flood were eating and drinking and getting married.

This is an evidence that they didn't know the disaster was coming. It says, and they did not know until the flood came and took them all away. The condition and the mood of the people in the flood just before the flood came was that all things are going well.

We're celebrating our wedding. You can't, if you knew you were going to be drowned the next day and all the people you knew around you were going to be drowned the next day and your wife, you wouldn't get married. Or if you did get married, you wouldn't be very cheerful.

You wouldn't be having a celebration because when you know that there's impending judgment, you can't just kind of ignore that and pretend like everything's okay. And in the days before Jesus comes, apparently that horrible judgment will be imminent, but they won't have any sense of it. So there will be the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

There will be celebrations, eating and drinking, giving in marriage and so forth. Just apparently right up until the moment that there's destruction comes suddenly, just like in the days of Noah, they did. But Jeremiah knew better.

Jeremiah knew there was destruction coming and therefore he would not participate in marrying and giving in marriage. He was not going to celebrate. It would be totally inappropriate when you know that your bride and any children you have are going to be slaughtered and die gruesome deaths.



Celebration is inappropriate and God's trying to spare him from mourning. So just don't get married because it'd be wrong for you to celebrate and it'd be painful for you to mourn. So let's just not think about getting married.

And it shall be when you show this people all the words and they say to you, why has the Lord pronounced all this great disaster against us or what is our iniquity or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God, then you shall say to them, because your fathers have forsaken me, says the Lord, and they have walked after other gods and have served them and worship them and have forsaken me and not kept my law. Now the people seem to be more or less oblivious to the fact that they're doing things so offensive to God. They say, what's the great sin here? What's the big crisis here? Why is God judging us like this? What sin have we done against him? It's interesting.

They didn't see themselves as really very bad people. They were probably all judging their own conduct by comparison with everyone else in the society who's doing the same thing. If the society is going down the tubes, the people who are going down the tubes don't sense they're going down.

There's no watermark to judge their own position by. Everyone's, you know, the waterline's going down for everybody. Everybody's, the bar's low.

I mean, people who will divorce without cause today, usually they're totally oblivious that this is a horrible thing to do. But why should they think it's horrible? Everybody does it. It's done in the church as much as in the world almost.

And, you know, it seems like it's just kind of a given in our culture. No one keeps their marriage covenants anymore, they think. And so they do horrendous, treacherous things.

And they think nothing of it. Why is this such a big deal? Why would anyone complain about this? I'm just being like everybody else. And so when people are measuring their conduct by their neighbor's conduct, then no matter how bad society gets, no one feels there's very much wickedness they're personally involved in.

They are involved in it, but they don't have a sense that it's wickedness because there's not a contrast. There's not somebody who's not acting that way for them to say, oh, by contrast, I am in fact doing really bad things. But if someone does, at times when society's gone that bad and their conscience of the society's so low, then if someone does stand up and say, wait a minute, here's where the standard is, you're way off.

They think that person's a radical. They think that person's a nut, a religious fanatic, because they're standing up for what everyone stood up at one time for, to speak against abortion. Even the Republican Party, which is supposed to be the more

conservative party, it's not valiant for life.

There are some candidates who do stand up for life, but the party itself is very ready to waffle on the subject. They don't see it as that big a thing. Those who are pro-lifers who march for life and so forth, they're just seen as nuts.

They're kind of just radicals. Radical right. The religious right.

But you know, those who are standing up for life right now are simply upholding the values that the whole country stood for. Even the unbelievers knew. In general, they knew that abortion was murder and it was wrong.

It's just that the society has degenerated so far that those who stand up and hold the old standard up and say, hey, wait, this is where the standard is that you fell from. This is where we belong. They just look like nuts.

So that the people who are sinning in the society that's going down the tube don't have any sense. They don't have any sensitivity to how bad they are. What are you talking about, judgment? What's so bad? What are we doing so bad that God's upset with us here? What's our great sin? And he says, the answer is you've forsaken God.

That's what it is. It's not even so much the individual sins you're committing, bad as they are and worthy of judgment as they are. Your big sin is that you've just forsaken God.

You have to understand that God isn't just complaining because you've added a lot of bad behavior to your life. He's the reason you've added is because you are ignoring God. You're trying to live a trying to pretend like God isn't there.

You're not consulting God to know whether your ways are right or not. That's the problem. You have forsaken wrong God and you've gone the wrong way and you've not kept my law.

He says in verse 12, and you have done worse than your fathers. For behold, each one of you walks according to the imagination of his own evil heart so that no one listens to me. Therefore, I will cast you out of this land into a land that you do not know, neither you nor your fathers.

And there you shall serve other gods day and night where I will not show you favor. You like these gods? Go to their homes. Don't bring them to my house.

You go live with them. Go serve them in their land. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall be no more said.

The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. But the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where he had driven them. For I will bring them back into their land, which I gave

to their fathers.

Now this is very much like the passages in Isaiah, which kind of leap forward to, first of all, the return of the exiles from Babylon, but more so to the messianic age of which the return of the exiles is a type in a shadow. He's saying the time will come where the exodus from Egypt will not be the marker from which you judge God's salvation, but rather the return from the exile from the lands of the north and all the countries where he had driven. That is, the return of the exiles from Babylon will eclipse in significance the importance of the deliverance from Egypt.

But more than that, of course, the return from the exiles in Babylon is a type of salvation in Christ. And it is actually in Christ that we find we no longer celebrate the exodus, we celebrate the cross. And that's what Jesus said when he was at that last Passover.

He celebrated with his disciples. Every year they celebrated Passover to remember the Lord God who brought us out of the land of Egypt. He says, not now, not from now on.

There's a new salvation. You do this in remembrance of me now. That is, I'm the new Savior.

This is a new salvation. You'll no longer be talking about God who brought you out of Egypt. You'll now be talking about the God who brought you into his kingdom, into the holy land, the spiritual land of his kingdom.

And that will totally cause you to forget, or at least it will eclipse in value any of the remembrance of the original exodus. That is, the founding of the nation was the exodus. But the founding of a new nation will be more important and more memorable than that.

As Jesus said, you now do this in remembrance of me, replacing the remembrance of the exodus. Verse 16, Behold, I will send for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they shall fish them. And afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill and out of the holes of the rocks.

For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from my face, nor is the iniquity hidden from my eyes. And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled my land.

They have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols. Now, it would look like verses 14 and 15 are themselves a standalone parenthesis about salvation. And that verse 16 perhaps goes back to talk about how the Babylonians will come and judge them and will fish them like fishermen fish fish.

They will hunt them like a hunter hunts its prey out of the holes in the rocks because that's where they went to hide from the invaders. And he says in verse 17 and 18, Because I've seen all the wickedness they've done. If verse 16 is taken as a continuation

of verse 15 instead, that is, if the messianic passage is continued one verse longer, then the fishermen could be seen as those that Jesus referred to as fishers of men going out and collecting them in, gathering them in from all the nations, as verse 15 says, from all the lands where they were driven.

He will draw them in and that that salvation, that regathering will eclipse the exodus importance. That is the new covenant. And it's interesting that when Jesus found Peter and James and John and Andrew, he said, follow me and I'll make you fishermen.

You'll be fishing for men. And he may have very well, although he was probably alluding to their actual trade as fishermen, he might have been alluding to this prediction that they will go out and gather in the remnant. They will gather in the believers from all nations.

And like he said, I'm going to send fishermen out to fish for them and bring them in. Difficult to know for sure. Verse 19.

Oh Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction. The Gentiles shall come to you. This is obviously the kingdom age.

The ends of the earth and from the ends of the earth and say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthlessness and unprofitable things. As the Gentiles have been worshiping idols because they've had these unprofitable traditions they've inherited from their ancestors, they'll recognize the emptiness of their idolatry and turn to Yahweh. Will a man make gods for himself which are not gods? Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know.

I will cause them to know my hand and my might. And they shall know that my name is Yahweh. So who are they? Probably these Gentiles.

So he is talking about the kingdom age. He is talking about the Gentiles forsaking their paganism and adopting the worship of Yahweh, which we do, of course, when we come to Christ. Now when it says, surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthlessness and unprofitable things, Peter might be referring to that in 1 Peter when he talks about the unprofitable things that his readers had inherited from their fathers previously.

And it's in 1 Peter 1 in verse 14, he says, as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts as in your ignorance. Actually, that's not the verse I was thinking of, although it is true. But verse 18, he says, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers.

It's referenced to the Gentile background of these readers whose religious views before was aimless, unprofitable conduct, which they received by tradition from their fathers. And that's what the Gentiles are acknowledging about their past in Jeremiah chapter 16,

verse 19. They'll say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthlessness and unprofitable things.

These are what they are redeemed from. This is what they're leaving behind in order to worship Yahweh. We, of course, live at a time where most Gentile nations don't bow down to images in the same sense that people did for so long.

And the reason for that, of course, is that we live in the Western world, which many centuries ago was conquered by Christianity. And therefore, the actual bowing down to images became not so much a normal part of the religious life of the heathen. Unfortunately, it became a part of the religious life of the Christians in the Catholic Church.

They began to bring the images in. But the heathens who were not in the Catholic Church, in many cases, were not bowing down to idols anymore. The Christianization of the culture seems to have eliminated that practice from the rank and file of the secular population in those lands where Christianity has been predominant.

There are still, of course, the people of India and other lands, Africa and other lands which have not been fully evangelized, where there still are people who worship fetishes and statues and things like that. The world still has its Gentiles who worship idols. But even in places like America or Western Europe where people don't bow down to images on a regular basis, even if they're not saved, they have their own false religions.

And they are represented here. Their attitudes of forsaking their false religions is represented as giving up the worthless things they've inherited from their fathers and adopting the new faith of Yahweh, which they will receive when they're evangelized. So, Chapter 16 basically is about Jeremiah not getting married and having to stay single so that he could avoid the mourning and also so that he might not participate in the celebrations associated with A, getting married, and B, losing your family in war.

And so we'll end there because of the time limit.