

October 1

Isaiah wrote about why it seemed that God did not answer the prayers of the people. It is not that his arm is too short to save. It is not that his ear is too dull to hear. Instead, it was the iniquities of the people that had come between them and God. Their sins had caused him to hide his face from them so that he did not hear their prayers. People were being violent, spilling blood; they were lying to one another and speaking of wicked things. They were using the law to cheat one another and practicing many other sins. James writes of another reason why prayers are not answered. He says that people ask wrongly in order to gain something for themselves. Prayer must be focused on God's will. It is not a magic bullet to get what we want. It is rather directed toward what God wants. Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but yours be done." Do we pray in that way? Do we ask for selfish things? James writes that the prayer of a righteous person has great power. Are we living the righteous life that God wants? Sometimes we say that God does not hear the prayers of unbelievers. Actually, he refuses to listen to the prayers of those who say they believe but continue to live in an unrighteous way. Do our sins separate us from God so that he doesn't hear our prayers? Our prayers should reflect our life for God.

Jesus picks up a statement in Isaiah and applies it to himself. It says that the Spirit of the Lord is on him, that the Lord that anointed him. God has sent him to bring good news to those who are oppressed. He is the one to bind up the brokenhearted. He proclaims liberty to captives and release to prisoners. He proclaims the year of the Lord's favor, which is also the day of vengeance that God brings. Truly Jesus is the anointed one (the Messiah, the Christ) who has brought the good news of salvation and liberty for those held captive by sin. Do we believe in him and experience his favor? Or do we fear the day of vengeance?

Jesus speaks against the scribes and Pharisees who practiced their faith in such a way as to be seen by people as being religious; they loved religious titles. Do we want to be seen as religious by men or by God?

October 2

Isaiah writes that he will tell about the gracious deeds of the Lord. He says they are praiseworthy acts. He has performed these acts because of his mercy and the abundance of this steadfast love. He has become the savior of his people in all their distress. He didn't send a messenger or angel to help them, but he himself redeemed them in his love and pity. He lifted them up and carried them like he did in days of old. And how did they repay him? The people rebelled against him and grieved his Holy Spirit. Do we experience God's mercy and abundance of steadfast love? Do we tell of his gracious deeds to others? Or do we rebel against him and grieve his Holy Spirit with our sins?

Isaiah writes that no one has ever seen any God besides the Lord. He works for those who wait for him. He is there for those who gladly do right and remember him by following his ways. But when we sin, he becomes angry and hides himself from us. Then we have become like unclean people, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth to him. When that happens, he turns us over to the results of our iniquity. But Isaiah says that God is our Father. We are like clay in the hands of a potter. All of us are the works of his hands. Isaiah asks God not to be exceedingly angry and not to remember the iniquity of his people. God has formed us like a potter forms a clay vessel. Each vessel has its purpose. Are we living up to our purpose? Do we wait for God to show himself in our lives? Or do we turn from him in sin, and he is hidden in his anger toward us? We have to be saved by him because of our sins. We cannot do enough righteous deeds to save ourselves. He views such efforts like filthy cloths. Jesus is the one who died and rose again to save us. Do we look to Jesus when God seems hidden?

God told Isaiah that he was ready for those who do not ask for him to seek him and for those who do not seek him to find him. He calls out to those who do not call on his name. But it seems like all day long he holds out his hands to a rebellious people who follow their own devices. Do we seek and find God, or choose our own way in rebellion?

October 3

God tells Isaiah that he is going to create new heavens and a new earth. When he does so, the former things will not be remembered or brought to mind. People should be glad and be rejoicing because of this. God will care for his people. He will answer even before they call; he will hear before they have finished speaking. It will be a time of return to paradise where wolves and lambs can feed together. There will not be hurt and destruction. The apostle Peter writes that because of this promise, we wait for that new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells. This heaven and earth will be destroyed by fire. That means that we should live holy and reverent lives now as we wait for the fulfillment of God's promise. The apostle John writes in the book of Revelation that in his vision he saw a new heaven and new earth in which God dwells among his people. It is a wonderful promise. Do we believe that promise? Are we waiting for that time of new creation? Are we being newly created ourselves in this time to live holy and reverent lives? Or are we so caught up in this world that we no longer look forward to God remaking it for the better?

Sometimes we get caught up in the structures that we build. We have fine houses and beautiful church buildings. The Israelites built a temple covered with gold to honor God. But while it was a place to worship God, he didn't live there. He told Isaiah that heaven was his throne and the earth was his footstool. He asked what kind of house they could possibly build for him to live in. He said that he made all these things; they all belong to him. But of more importance than that beautiful building is the relationship of God with people. He told Isaiah that the kind of person that he looked at was one who was humble and contrite in spirit and who trembled at his word. What do we offer God? Beautiful buildings or a humble spirit? Are we people who respect his word so much that we tremble at the thought of disobeying it? Does God look at us? Or do we take a false pride in how well we obey? That is a danger. God told Isaiah that those who rebel against him will be destroyed by a fire that will not be quenched. Let us humbly obey rather than rebel.

October 4

God called Jeremiah to be a prophet in the years before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. God told him that he knew him even before he formed him in the womb. God consecrated him even before he was born and appointed him to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah's response to this call was like Moses' response when he was called to lead the people out of Egyptian slavery; he began to make excuses. "I don't know how to speak," he said, and "I am only a boy." God did not listen to his excuses. He told him not to say that he was just a boy. God said Jeremiah was going to go to all the people where God would send him. He would speak whatever God commanded him. God would be with him to deliver him from harm, and so he should not be afraid. Do we realize that God knew all about us even before we were born? He has a purpose for us. Do we try to understand our purpose in this life? Do we try to live up to it? Or do we make excuses to God as to why we can't do the things that he commands? Do we trust that God will take care of us in times of trouble?

Some people don't like puns, but God uses them with the prophets. The Hebrew words for "almond" and "watching" sound a lot alike. God showed Jeremiah an almond tree in a vision and asked what it was. When Jeremiah answered, God told him that he was watching over his word to perform it. Sometimes people think that God will not do what he says he will do, especially when God is (as they think) slow about making his words come true. The apostle Peter writes that God is not being slow about his warning but is being patient with people to give them a chance to repent. Do we see God's patience as slowness? Do we apply that only to others and not to ourselves as needing God's patience?

God told Jeremiah that the people had forgotten the things he had done for them in the past; they had committed two errors: they had forsaken him, the fountain of living waters, and they had dug cracked cisterns for themselves that would not hold water. Do we forget what God has done in the past? Do we try to make our own ideas regarding spiritual water?

October 5

Though Jeremiah God challenged the Jews to have the gods that they had made for themselves save them. He said that if they can save them, let them come in the time of trouble. In our world today, it seems that secularism has replaced polytheism as the alternative to God. But can secularism actually save people? Are people today happier doing their own thing instead of obeying God? Is there less depression? Is there less mental stress and mental illness? Is there less suicide? It would seem that secularism is no better than idolatry in its ability to save.

God told Jeremiah that the people had done wickedly, including killing the innocent poor, but they claimed that they were innocent. So he was bringing judgment on them for saying, "I have not sinned." The apostle John writes that if we say that we have not sinned, we are making God to be a liar. Only one man, Jesus of Nazareth, lived a sinless life, and he was put to death for our sins. We should put our trust in him and not in our fake sinless life. Do we fool ourselves, thinking we are sinless?

God told Jeremiah that because the people were sinning, he was withholding the rain showers; the spring rains had not come in their due time. This is what God warned the people would happen in the book of Leviticus. If they continued in sin, he would make the sky like iron and the earth like copper. Nothing would grow. Do we believe God when he says that he controls the weather? He uses it to call people to repentance. He says that worse things will happen if he is ignored. Are we people who ignore God's call to repentance? Do we suffer the consequences? Do we blame God when we are the ones doing wrong?

The people of Israel trusted in the fact that they had the ark of the covenant in the temple. They thought they had God in a box. He told Jeremiah that people would quit calling on the ark. It would disappear and no longer be missed or remembered. No replacement would be made. Do we depend on our worship rather than on the God who is worshiped? Do we think it controls God so we have him in a box?

October 6

Because the people of Judah had become wicked, God was sending an invading army against them. He told Jeremiah that when the army comes, the king and his officials would lose courage, the priests would be appalled, and the prophets would be astounded. They had been prophesying, "It shall be well with you," even while the people were sinning. In doing so, they had deceived the people and led to their destruction. Positive messages are fine if people are obeying God, but sometimes people need to hear negative messages that call them to repentance. No one likes to be told that they have to change, but change is often necessary to avoid destruction. Do we listen to messages that say everything is fine when everything is not fine because of the lives that we are living? Are we deceived by others with a positive message? Or do we deceive ourselves when we fail to repent?

God told Jeremiah that destruction was coming on the people because the people were foolish. They did not know God and acted like senseless children. He said they had no understanding. God said they were skilled in doing evil but did not know how to do good. People get skilled in doing evil by continually doing evil. When they keep on doing evil, they forget how to do good. Are we skilled in doing good or in doing evil? What do we do over and over? Do we know God? The apostle John wrote that the way we know that we know God is if we keep his commandments. Do we keep his commandments?

Sometimes it is hard to know ourselves truly. Peter told Jesus that he was ready to die with him. Shortly after, he denied Jesus three times. Multiple people had accused him of being with Jesus while he felt alone in the courtyard of the high priest. He was not with Jesus at the time and gave into fear at the peer pressure brought on him. The book of Chronicles says that God left King Hezekiah to himself as a test to know what was in his heart. Peter failed that test while being without Jesus. Have we been tested by God when we are left alone to ourselves? If so, did we pass the test? If we failed, did we weep like Peter did?

October 7

God told Jeremiah that his people were foolish and senseless. They were like people who had eyes but didn't see and like people who had ears but didn't hear. God wanted to know why they didn't fear him and why they didn't tremble before him. The people had stubborn and rebellious hearts that never asked if they should fear the God who sent the rains. He said their sins had deprived them of what is good. They abused other people in order to become rich and distort justice. Their prophets prophesied falsely, and their priests ruled as the prophets said to. And the people loved to have it that way. God said he was going to bring punishment on them because of this. Do we see and hear with our eyes and ears what God wants us to see and hear? Do we fear God and tremble before him? Or do we abuse other people and love to hear things that are really not true? If so, will we escape punishment?

God told Jeremiah that all the people, from the least to the greatest, were greedy for unjust gain. Even the prophets and priests dealt falsely with others. This caused a great wound for his people, but it was treated carelessly. People cried out, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. They acted shamefully and committed abominations of which they were not ashamed. God said that they didn't know how to blush. That is why God was going to punish them. Are we caught up in greed? Does it cause us to look for ways to acquire gain unjustly? Do we say that everything is all right when it is not? Are we ashamed of things that are shameful? Have we forgotten how to blush?

God told Jeremiah that people should ask for the ancient pathways where the good way lies. They should walk in that way, and they would find rest for their souls. But it seems that the people did not want to walk in the way that God said to. So he raised up sentinels to warn them, but they refused to listen to the warnings. Because they did not listen to his words and rejected his teaching, God was going to bring punishment on them. Do we look for the ancient paths that are the good way? Do we wisely listen to God's words and follow his teaching?

October 8

God told Jeremiah to go to the temple and preach to the people. His message was that they were to amend their ways and practices. They were not to put their trust in the fact that they had God's temple. Rather, he wanted them to stop oppressing the foreigners, widows, and orphans, to stop shedding innocent blood, and to stop worshiping idols. It seems they were committing theft, murder, and adultery, practicing false witness, and worshiping idols, and then coming to the temple and saying they were safe. It was like they had turned the temple into a den of robbers. God said they should look at Shiloh, where the tabernacle once stood, and see that it was now destroyed. He warned that Jerusalem would also be destroyed if they did not repent. Do we trust in our church buildings as sacred places? Do we make church attendance the hallmark of Christianity? Do we leave the impression that if one comes to the assembly to worship, their everyday practices don't matter? One should attend church, but if assembling there does not teach us to live our everyday lives according to God's will, our worship is vain.

God told Jeremiah not to pray for his people. He should not intercede for them in prayer because they were so wicked that God would not hear prayers on their behalf. He said that the children gather the wood, the fathers start the fire, and the women bake the cakes on it for the queen of heaven. Drink offerings were poured out to other gods, and God was going to pour out his wrath on his people. Are we living the kind of life where God will hear our prayers? Will he even hear the prayers of others on our behalf? Are we caught up in the worship of false gods? Jesus indicated that the false god that many get caught up in worshipping is Mammon, that is, wealth. Are we so busy accumulating wealth that we have no time for God? Does our accumulation of wealth cause us to deal dishonestly with others in order to gain it?

Judas betrayed Jesus because of his greed. In the end, however, he threw the money back into the temple and committed suicide. Do we realize that greed can lead to the loss of everything?



October 9

When God thought of how Job lived, he bragged about him to Satan. He was proud of Job's life. On the other hand, he was very upset with how the people of Judah were living during the time of the prophet Jeremiah. They were so wicked that he was going to cause an invading army to come against them. He was not happy that this had become necessary. He told Jeremiah that he wished his head were a spring of water and his eyes a fountain of tears so that he could weep night and day for those who would be slain. How do our lives make God feel? Does he want to brag about us? Does he feel it is necessary to bring evil on us? Does he weep night and day because of us? How do we affect God?

God said the people were wicked because they committed adultery, deceived their neighbors, and told lies instead of the truth. What kind of lives do we live? Would God call them righteous or wicked?

God told Jeremiah that the wise should not boast about their wisdom, the mighty should not boast about their might, and the wealthy should not boast about their wealth. If people want to boast, they should boast that they understand and know God, that he is the LORD. He says that he acts with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness on the earth because he delights in those things. What do we boast about? Is it the things and abilities that we have? Or do we boast about God? Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." Do we delight in steadfast love, justice, and righteousness like God does? Do we strive to have those qualities ourselves?

God told Jeremiah not to learn the ways of the nations around Judah. He was not to be dismayed at the signs of the heavens like the people of the surrounding nations were. God said that the customs of the people were false. Who do we look to for the future? Do we look to God's word to tell us what he says will happen? Or do we look to our horoscope in the daily newspaper to see what the heavenly signs say are going to happen? Do we vainly consult an astrologer to find out how to live our lives?

October 10

Jeremiah writes that God is the one who made the earth by his power and established the world by his wisdom. He stretched out the heavens by his understanding. God is the one who makes mist rise from the earth and who sends lightning and wind with the rain. Everyone who makes their own gods is senseless because God is the one who formed all things. Do we worship God as the Creator? If he is the Creator, do we look to him to find out how he says we should live?

Jeremiah says that trouble has come upon his people because the shepherds of his people are senseless. They do not inquire of the Lord, and therefore they do not prosper, and their flock is scattered. Do the shepherds of our churches inquire of the Lord? Do they look in God's word to find out how to lead? Or do they use human wisdom in the decisions that they make?

Jeremiah writes that the way of humans is not within themselves. They do not have the ability to direct their own steps. He asks God to correct him when he goes astray, but to use just measure. He doesn't want God to correct him in anger lest he be destroyed. Do we try to direct our own steps? Do we want God to correct us when we go astray?

Once again, God told Jeremiah not to pray for the wicked people around him. He was not going to listen when they called on him in their time of trouble. He said they had no right in his house while they were doing vile deeds. They tried to make vows and sacrifices to avert their doom, but those were of no use. They had provoked God to anger by worshiping a false god. Do we go our own way, but then call on God in times of trouble? Do we think he will answer if we have been unfaithful?

God warned Jeremiah that the people of his hometown were scheming to kill him. Jeremiah had not realized this until God told him. He was like a lamb led to the slaughter. God was going to destroy those wicked people. Do we trust God to watch out for us like he did for Jeremiah?

October 11

Jeremiah told God that he knew that God was in the right if he complained against God, but still he had a question for God. He wanted to know why the guilty prosper. He wondered why those who were treacherous seemed to thrive. They didn't speak about God and didn't hold him in their hearts, while Jeremiah's heart was with God. He wanted God to destroy these wicked people. God's answer was that Jeremiah needed to be strong. God said that if racing with runners had worn Jeremiah out, how could he compete with horses? The world was more like the thickets around the Jordan River than traveling in a safe land. Even Jeremiah's relatives and close family were plotting against him. Their friendly words hid their real intentions. God said that his people that he had chosen as his heritage had abandoned him too. That is why punishment was going to come on them. Do we also wonder why those who disobey God seem to prosper? Can we learn to wait for God to punish them in his own right time? Do we realize that we need to be strong in this wicked world? Does serving God wear us out too?

God told Jeremiah to buy a linen loincloth and wear it without putting it in water. After he had worn it, God told him to take it to the Euphrates River and bury it. After many days had passed, God told Jeremiah to return to the place where he had buried it and dig it up. When Jeremiah dug it up, he found that it was ruined and good for nothing. God said that he had held Israel close to him like a loincloth, but the people had buried themselves in sin and now they were ruined and good for nothing. They had stubbornly followed their own will and worshiped other gods. Do we realize that those close to God can turn away from him and put other things before him? Do we know that burying ourselves in sin ruins our purpose in life? Do we ever follow our own stubborn will instead of striving to do his will?

Jeremiah said that God will turn the light into darkness for those who have pride and are haughty. Jeremiah's eyes would weep bitterly for them. Do we weep over those whose light has turned to darkness?

October 12

God repeated his admonition to Jeremiah not to pray for the welfare of his people. He would not hear their prayer even if they fasted. He would not accept them even if they offered burnt offerings and grain offerings. Because they were wicked, they were going to be destroyed by sword, by famine, and by disease. Jeremiah protested that the prophets were saying that they would not see destruction by sword or famine but would have peace. God said that the prophets were prophesying lies in his name; he did not send them nor command them nor give them a message to tell. Their prophecies were a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. God was going to destroy those prophets. Do we try to placate God with prayers, fastings, and offerings while we live life as we please? Do we listen to prophets and preachers who have only positive messages and never call for repentance? Are we influenced by modern-day prophets who make up messages about the future that don't come true? Do they ask us for money because they are prophets? Do we instead look to God's word to find the truth?

The people in Jeremiah's time were so wicked that God said even if Moses and Samuel were before him pleading for them, he would not listen. If they asked where they should go, Jeremiah should tell them that they were destined for disease, the sword, famine, and captivity. King Manasseh had led them to this disastrous state. God said that he was tired of relenting when he promised destruction. This time he would destroy them. Leaders have an influence on their followers for good or for evil. Do we blindly follow what our leaders say to do? Do we check their statements against what God says in his word?

Jeremiah bemoaned the fact that his mother had given birth to him; he had become a man of strife and contention to people throughout the land because he told God's message. He neither borrowed nor lent money, but people cursed him. God told him that he had made Jeremiah to be the enemy of the people, but he had also protected him. Do we become enemies of those around us when we share the message of Jesus?

October 13

God told Jeremiah that those who put their trust in humans are cursed. They make human flesh their strength and their hearts turn away from the Lord. They are like a shrub in the desert where rain doesn't fall in an uninhabited salt land. Do we put our trust in people? Do we think that those in government will solve our problems? Do we trust that scientists have the answers to the world? Do we think that technical engineers will fix the problems that we face? Do we think that the opinions of those in the entertainment world are to be followed? If so, do we feel like we are living in a parched wilderness?

God told Jeremiah that those who put their trust in the Lord are blessed. They are like a tree that is planted by a stream of water with its roots reaching that life-giving source. That tree is not afraid of the heat and keeps its leaves green. It bears fruit even when the rain does not fall. Do we put our trust in God? Is he the One we pray to in times of trouble? Do we search his word to find out how we should live? Do we find in that trust the life-giving source that comes from God's Spirit? Do we show the fruit of the Spirit? Do we follow the example that the Son of God has set for us by his life on this earth? Is our faith in Jesus?

God told Jeremiah that the human heart is devious above all else. It is perverse and cannot really be understood. But God is the One who tests the mind and searches the heart. He gives to everyone according to their ways of life, according to the fruit of their actions. Do we trust in our own hearts? God knows what we are really thinking. Do we imagine good things to come from our thoughts, but our actions produce problem fruit? Do we fool ourselves to think that we understand our own hearts?

God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house where he saw a clay pot on the wheel spoiled and the clay remade into a different vessel. God said that he is like a potter, and we are like the clay in his hands. If, in his working with us, we are spoiled, he has the right to use us for another purpose. Do we strive to be molded into what God initially wants?

October 14

People did not like what Jeremiah was prophesying about the country being destroyed. They said that priests would not stop giving instruction, that wise men would not stop giving counsel, and that their prophets would not stop giving their word. They wanted not only to ignore Jeremiah but also bring charges against him. Jeremiah asked God why they were returning evil for the good he was trying to do. He was trying to turn away God's wrath from them with his call to repent. Since they refused to listen and even turned against him, he asked God to take vengeance on them. How do we respond when people return evil for the good we try to do? Do we want to take vengeance on them ourselves? Or do we leave it to God to take vengeance as the scriptures say to do?

God told Jeremiah to buy a clay jug from the potter and gather the elders and senior priests at the valley of Ben Hinnom south of the old City of David in Jerusalem. There he gave God's word to them that God was going to bring such destruction on the city that would cause the ears of the people who heard about it to tingle. People had been offering their children as burnt offerings to Ba'al in that valley, something God never commanded nor even thought about. So God was going to bring an army against them, and they would die by the sword there. It would be renamed the Valley of Slaughter. Then Jeremiah broke the jug into pieces and said that Jerusalem would be so broken that it could not be mended. When he returned to the temple, he gave the same message. The priest Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple, struck him and put him in stocks for the night. Jeremiah then prophesied that Pashhur would be taken as a captive to Babylon and die there. Do we sometimes face opposition, maybe even violence, when we try to warn people about God's wrath that is coming on them because of their lifestyle? Because of the opposition that Jeremiah faced, he said that he had become a laughingstock to people. In response, he tried not to speak in God's name, but God's word became like a burning fire in his bones. He was tired of holding it in and could not. He had to speak it. Does God's word burn in our bones if we don't share it? People need to hear it.

October 15

Jeremiah was so upset with people's opposition to him and his message that he wished he had never been born. He cursed the day of his birth and wondered why he was not killed while still in the womb. He said he had come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow and spend his days in shame. Are we ever discouraged by the way that people around us treat us? Do we get so depressed that we wish we had never been born? Do we realize that God has a purpose for us even in the midst of opposition from those around us? Do we live for that purpose?

King Zedekiah, the third of Josiah's sons to be king of Judah, sent two officials to Jeremiah to inquire of the Lord about the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (also known as Nebuchadnezzar). He wanted God to perform a miracle to save the city. The message from the Lord that he received was that God was going to fight against Judah's army and deliver the people and Zedekiah into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar. Further, Jeremiah was told to tell the people that God was setting before them two ways: the way of life and the way of death. Those who surrendered to the Babylonians would live, and those who stayed in the city would die by sword, famine, and disease. The city was to be burned with fire. Do we look for a miracle from God when we get in a situation caused by our own disobedience? Are we willing to take the path that we don't like in order to save our lives? Will we take the path of following Jesus in order to save our souls? Will we surrender our lives to him?

God had sent Jeremiah to the house of the king to warn him to act with justice and righteousness, to deliver those robbed from their oppressors, not to do wrong or violence against foreigners, widows, and orphans, and not to shed innocent blood. If he did these things, he would continue on the throne; if not, the city would be destroyed. That warning was ignored, and Jerusalem with its temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. Do we take the warnings we find in the Bible seriously? Do we live justly and righteously as God asks us to live?

October 16

Jeremiah gave a prophecy about the shepherds of God's people who destroy and scatter the sheep of God's pasture (that is, his people). God told Jeremiah that rather than attending to his flock, such shepherds had scattered the people and driven them away. So God was going to attend to these shepherds and appoint new ones who would care for his people. He would regather his people who had been scattered. Leadership of God's people is an awesome responsibility. When leaders work to advance their own ideas and selves at the expense of a congregation, God is not pleased. If we are leaders, do we push our own agenda at the expense of those we are supposed to care for? Do we simply say that they can go somewhere else? Are we tired of shepherding those who disagree with us?

God told Jeremiah that in the future he was going to raise up a righteous branch for David. That descendant would reign as king, deal wisely, and execute justice and righteousness. That scripture is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the king of kings who taught people how to live justly and righteously. Do we pledge our allegiance to him? Do we live justly and righteously as he taught us to do?

God spoke to Jeremiah about the false prophets in the land. They lived wicked lives. The prophets of Samaria had led the people of the northern kingdom of Israel to worship Ba'al. The prophets of Jerusalem committed adultery, told lies, and encouraged evildoers to continue their wicked practices. God said not to listen to them. They spoke from visions of their own minds. They told those who despised the word of the Lord that it would go well with them. They assured those who followed their own stubborn hearts that no calamity would come upon them. They uttered prophecies from their dreams that God had not given them. God said that they could tell their dreams, but the one who had his word should speak it faithfully. Do we listen to people who claim to share God's words, but their lives show something else? If we know God's word, do we speak it faithfully?



October 17

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the second son of Josiah to reign as king over Judah, Jeremiah gave a prophecy against the country. He had been prophesying for twenty-three years by this time, warning the people to repent so that God would not destroy the kingdom. However, he writes that the people had not listened. So God said that he was going to send the Babylonian king named Nebuchadrezzar against the country. It would be a ruin and waste when he was finished. Do we listen to the warnings found in God's word? Do we sit in church and hear calls to repent and simply ignore them?

God told Jeremiah to take his cup of wrath around to all the countries around Judah and have them drink symbolizing what was going to happen to them. He was to go to the people of Egypt, the Philistine cities, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, Arabia, Elam, and Media. Even though we think of God as the God of the Israelites, he is the one God of all the world and is concerned about all his creation. These people had been worshipping false gods, and God was going to send the Babylonian army against them. After he had used the Babylonians to punish these other nations, Babylon itself (called by its code name Sheshach) would be punished for the sins of its people. God is still concerned about people all over the earth. They too are his creation. Jesus said to go into all the world and make disciples of his from all nations. He said that he had other sheep that were not a part of the flock (that is, were not a part of the Jewish nation). Do we take the message of Jesus to people around the world? They too need to repent and follow him. Or are we concerned only about the people at home that look and act like us?

When Jeremiah prophesied in the temple courtyard, he was arrested for saying that the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed just like Shiloh, the place housing the tabernacle, was. The priests and prophets wanted to put him to death, but the officials and the ordinary people said that he had prophesied in the name of the Lord, so he was spared. Do we face opposition when we share the hard truth of the word of God?

October 18

Although Jeremiah was rescued when people wanted to put him to death because of his prophecies that the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed, another prophet named Uriah did not escape death. He had prophesied the same things and angered King Jehoiakim. When he fled to Egypt for safety, the king sent servants to Egypt to capture him and bring him back. They did so, and the king had him killed. Uriah was just one of the prophets who were killed because people didn't like God's message. Do we suppose that there is no danger in sharing the message of God? Are we willing to give our lives to share his word? Jesus gave his life in order to save us. Are we willing to die for him?

Toward the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah, the third of Josiah's sons to rule over Judah, Jeremiah was told by God to make yokes as symbols of submission and take them to the representatives of the surrounding countries who were meeting in Jerusalem. They were told to serve King Nebuchadnezzar because God had raised him up for this purpose. If they submitted, they could stay in their land, but if they refused, they would suffer sword, famine, and disease. They should not listen to false prophets who told the lie that they would not have to serve that king. In Judah, false prophets were saying that Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin), the son of King Jehoiakim, would soon return from Babylonian captivity along with the temple treasures that had been taken. Jeremiah had previously prophesied that the captivity would last seventy years. God told Jeremiah that the rest of the temple treasures would be taken to Babylon. Do we listen to those today who claim to know the future? Do we compare their messages with what God has said in the scriptures? Can we tell when people are telling lies?

The false prophet Hananiah broke the wooden yoke that Jeremiah was wearing. He said that Jeconiah, the ten thousand exiles, and the temple treasures would return in two years. God told Jeremiah to make an iron yoke because lies don't change what will happen. Do we believe lies about the future? Do we realize that God's promises will come true?

October 19

Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin) succeeded his father Jehoiakim as king of Judah when Nebuchadnezzar was attacking Jerusalem. He surrendered to the Babylonians and was taken captive to Babylon together with his mother, the court officials, the Jewish leaders, the artisans, and the smiths. When the new king Zedekiah sent messengers to Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah also gave them a prophetic letter to take to the exiles. In it God told the people to build houses, plant gardens, hold marriages, and have children. They should multiply and not decrease in the country of their exile. They should seek the welfare of the city where they live and pray to the Lord for it, since its welfare would lead to their own welfare in it. God warned that there were false prophets and dreamers who were telling the lie that they would soon return to Jerusalem. However, God said that the captivity would last seventy years. God said he had good plans for these exiles, plans for their welfare, so that they would have a future filled with hope. When they called upon the Lord in prayer, he would hear them. If they searched for God, they would find him. In the future he would restore their fortunes and bring them back to the land they were exiled from. However, he compared the people who were left in Jerusalem with rotten figs that were so bad they could not be eaten. Because they did not listen to his words that he sent by his servants the prophets, he was going to bring on them the sword, famine, and disease. Sometimes we read of God's promise of good plans in this letter to the exiles and are tempted to apply it to ourselves, even though we haven't been exiled. God does have good plans for those who will seek him and search for him by the lives they live, calling upon him in prayer. But the letter also contains words of warning for those who will not listen to his words. Even for those in exile, God calls out the false prophets Zedekiah and Ahab by name and says that King Nebuchadnezzar was going to burn them in a fire. Do we listen to God's word? Do we imagine his immediate release from our problems? Or do we submit to God's timeline? Do we seek the welfare of the cities where we live? Do we seek God and search for him, calling on him in prayer? He will listen if we listen to his words and do them.

October 20

God told Jeremiah that he was going to bring people in exile back to their homeland. There would be great rejoicing at that time. Just as he had scattered Israel, so he would gather them again. He said the children would come back to their own country. It seems that the Israelites kept turning to idol worship from the time they left Egypt. It was only after God sent them off to the Babylonian captivity that they learned to be true to him alone. Do we worship the one God? Do we have to go through calamity like they did in order to learn to be true to God?

God told Jeremiah that a voice was heard in the city of Ramah; it was the sound of lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, was said to be weeping for her children and refused to be comforted because they had perished. While, in the context of Jeremiah, this passage refers to mourning over children in the tribe of Ephraim which was descended from Rachel, the apostle Matthew applies it to the mothers who cried at the slaughter of their babies in Bethlehem by King Herod when he tried to kill the Messiah Child. Rachel had been buried in the region of Bethlehem; thus the passage fits the situation. But God protected Jesus from Herod. His protection did not mean that Herod would not do an evil deed. Do we realize that there are evil people in the world who choose to do wrong and cause many tears to be shed?

God told Jeremiah that he was going to make a new covenant with people. It would not be like the covenant which he made when he brought the Israelites out of Egypt. They broke that covenant. He would write his laws on people's hearts and be their God, and they would be his people. They would not have to exhort one another to know the Lord, since they would already know him. He would forgive their iniquities and not remember their sins any more. The book of Hebrews applies this to Jesus' new covenant with us. It is internal on our hearts. It is personal since we enter the covenant by knowing the Lord. It promises forgiveness because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Do we thank God for receiving such a new covenant? Do we keep it?

October 21

Jeremiah had prophesied against King Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah to rule Judah, in his tenth year as king. At that time Nebuchadnezzar was besieging the city of Jerusalem because Zedekiah had rebelled against him. Jeremiah had said that Zedekiah would be captured by Nebuchadnezzar, meet him face to face, and be taken as a captive to Babylon where he would remain. His rebellion against the Babylonians would not be successful. Zedekiah had imprisoned Jeremiah and placed him in the court of the guard in the royal palace. Are people unhappy with us when we warn them about the consequences of their life choices? Are we surprised when they retaliate against us?

While Jeremiah was imprisoned in the court of the guard, God told him that his cousin Hanamel was going to come to see him and ask him to redeem a field in his hometown of Anathoth. This happened just as God had said it would. Jeremiah agreed to purchase the field for seventeen shekels of silver. He signed the deed, sealed a copy, got witnesses for the transaction, and weighed out the silver. He took the two copies of the deed, one sealed and the other open, and gave them to his friend Baruch to put in a pot to preserve them so they would last a long time. Then in the presence of the people in the courtyard, he said that God had revealed that a day would come when houses, fields, and vineyards would again be bought in Judah. Sometimes when things are going wrong in our lives, the future looks very bleak. But the future is in God's hands, and he knows what is going to happen. Good things may not come right away; they may not even come in our lifetime. We all have to face death at some point. It would be another fifty-three years before King Cyrus allowed the people to return to Judah. In the meantime Jeremiah had been forcefully taken to Egypt. He never used the field he purchased. But God's promise did turn out to be true. Jeremiah knew it would, and he prayed to God, praising him for what he said would happen in the future, even though the present was a time of trouble. Do we believe God and praise him when he says that we will rise from the dead when Jesus comes again? He plans good things for us.

October 22

God told Jeremiah that in the future he was going to cause a righteous Branch to spring up for the family of David. He would execute justice and righteousness and bring in salvation. That prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus. He is the righteous descendent of David who has brought salvation by his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Do we put our trust in the one who calls for justice and righteousness? Do we trust him to save us? He promises to raise us from the dead too.

The Law of Moses states that Israelite slaves could only be kept as slaves for seven years; then they had to be given their freedom. That was part of God's covenant with the people, but this particular commandment was usually ignored. However, when Nebuchadnezzar's army was attacking Jerusalem, the king and his people decided that it was best to start keeping the Law of Moses in hopes that God would help them. They made a covenant to release their Jewish slaves, and sealed it in the old way of walking between the halves of a dead calf cut in two. But when the Babylonian army temporarily withdrew, they broke their covenant and forced their former slaves back into slavery. God told Jeremiah that the people had profaned his name by enslaving those freed once again. So he was going to free them to be destroyed by sword, by disease, and by famine. He was going to make them like the calf whose halves they had walked between. He would command the Babylonian army to return and capture the city and burn it with fire. Do we decide to obey what God says to do only when we are in trouble? Do we make promises to God that we fail to keep? Do we realize that God is displeased if we break the covenant he has made with us?

God told Jeremiah to take the clan of the Rechabites to the temple and offer them wine to drink. When he did so, they refused to drink the wine. Their ancestor Jonadab son of Rechab had commanded them never to drink wine. God said they kept the command of their ancestor, but his people have ignored his servants the prophets that he has repeatedly sent to them. Do we ignore what God has said in his word?

October 23

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the second son of Josiah to serve as king of Judah, God told Jeremiah to write his prophecies that he had received on a scroll. Jeremiah asked his friend Baruch to write them down while he dictated. When they had finished, Jeremiah asked Baruch to go to the temple and read the scroll to the people during the celebration of a fast. He did so in the winter of the next year. When the son of a royal official heard the reading, he told the king's officials, and they asked Baruch to read the scroll to them. When he did so, they said they needed to read the scroll to King Jehoiakim, but Baruch and Jeremiah needed to go into hiding. They read the scroll to the king, and he was not pleased. Every three or four columns that were read, he would take a penknife and cut them off of the scroll. He would then throw them into the fire that was blazing to heat the winter cold. His officials asked him not to do this, but they were not alarmed or saddened. The king wanted Jeremiah and Baruch arrested, but God had hidden them. God told Jeremiah to get another scroll and write the prophecies on it again. He was to add new prophecies to it, including a prophecy against King Jehoiakim for burning the scroll. He said the king was going to die and not be buried. So Jeremiah dictated a new scroll to Baruch and added the new prophecies to it. This was not the last time that people have tried to burn God's words. Bibles have been burnt throughout the ages. Other people have banned the Bible, and some have simply ignored it. What is our reaction to God's word? Do we try to destroy it, or do we just ignore the things it says that we don't like?

Nebuchadrezzar made Zedekiah king after Jehoiakim's death and his son's capture. But he too rebelled against the Babylonians, and they laid siege to Jerusalem. When the Egyptians brought an army against them, they left the siege to fight the Egyptians. Jeremiah told Zedekiah that the Egyptians would go home, and the Babylonians would return. He left to see the field he had bought at Anathoth, but he was arrested by a guard who said he was deserting to the Babylonians. Do we suppose that people will not harm us if we tell them the truth of God's message?

October 24

When Jeremiah was falsely arrested, he was sent to the house of the secretary Jonathan. King Zedekiah sent for him to ask about the word from the Lord. Jeremiah told him that he would be handed over to the king of Babylon. Then Jeremiah asked what he had done wrong. He wanted to know where those false prophets were who had been saying that the king of Babylon would not come against Jerusalem. He asked not to be sent back to Jonathan's house to die. So the king had him placed in the court of the guard and daily given bread to eat. Today there are false prophets who say they know when Jesus is coming back. When their dates prove wrong, they seem to disappear. Do we get excited about predictions from those who prove to be false prophets? Do we get excited about the truth found in God's word?

Several officials said that Jeremiah was discouraging the soldiers by telling people they needed to surrender to the Babylonians to save their lives. Most of those who stayed in the city would die. These officials had Jeremiah put in an empty cistern to starve to death. There was mud in the bottom and Jeremiah sank in the mud. A Cushite eunuch in the king's house named Ebed-melech told the king that Jeremiah would die there, and the king told him to get some men and ropes and lift him out of the cistern. Jeremiah stayed in the court of the guard until the city was taken by the Babylonians. God had him tell Ebed-melech that he had gained his life by his actions and would not die when the city was captured. The story of Jesus tells us how to be saved by surrendering our lives to God. But there are people who do not like that message and oppose us when we tell the story. Do we tell the story in the face of opposition? Do we help those who are being oppressed for telling the story of Jesus? Do we try to rescue them from trouble?

After a year and a half siege, the city of Jerusalem was conquered. The king and army fled to the Jordan valley where they were captured. The king saw his sons killed before his eyes were put out. Do we, like him, disregard the warnings of punishment that come on the disobedient?



October 25

When the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, they took most of the people that survived captive to Babylon. They left the poorest of the people in the land and gave them fields and vineyards to support themselves. There is irony in the fact that the Babylonians provided for the poor since God's prophets had warned the Israelites not to oppress the poor, something that they were doing. God said he would take care of the poor, but no one expected it to happen in this way. Jeremiah was given a choice of going to Babylon or staying in the land with Gedaliah, the governor that the Babylonians had appointed to watch over the people who were left in the land. He decided to stay with Gedaliah at Mizpah. When the Jewish soldiers who had been scattered throughout the land heard about Gedaliah, they also gathered to him. Jewish exiles in Moab, Ammon, and Edom also returned to him. Johanan, a leader of soldiers, warned Gedaliah that Ishmael, another leader, wanted to kill him, but Gedaliah refused to believe this report about Ishmael. A few months later, Ishmael and ten of his soldiers killed Gedaliah and many of the people at Mizpah, taking the others captive. Johanan and other leaders took their men and rescued the captives, but Ishmael and eight of his men escaped. Once violence starts, it seems to go on and on. Are we caught up in retaliation? Does it involve violence? Do we help the poor? Do we provide them means to help themselves?

After Gedaliah's death, the people left in the land were afraid that the Babylonians would return and punish them for his death. They decided to go to Egypt where they thought they would be safe. They asked Jeremiah to consult the Lord for his advice. They told him they would do whatever God said to do. Ten days later God gave a prophecy to Jeremiah. He said that they should stay in the land. The Babylonians would not hurt them. But he knew that they wanted to go to Egypt. God said that if they went to Egypt, they would find trouble there. They would end up dying by the sword, famine, and disease. But they were determined to go to Egypt. Do we make up our minds about something before consulting God's word? Do we find we can't change our minds?

October 26

When Jeremiah told the people left in the land of Judah that God wanted them to stay there, they rejected the message. Johanan and the other leaders accused Jeremiah of lying. They said that Baruch put him up to giving this prophecy, that it was not from God. They thought they would be killed by the Babylonians if they stayed in the land because Gedaliah the governor had been killed. So Johanan and the other leaders took all the people left, including Jeremiah and Baruch, and went to Egypt. When they arrived at Tahpanhes, a city in the northeastern part of Egypt, God told Jeremiah to go to the palace that Pharaoh kept there. He was to bury stones under the brick pavement at the palace. The message to be given at that time was that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was going to come and set up his throne under a pavilion above those stones. There would be no escape from him in Egypt. Do we sometimes think that the word of God has been made up by men? Do we refuse to believe what it says because our human reason tells us it is wrong? Do we think that we can escape punishment by the plans that we make? Do we realize there is no escape from God?

While in Egypt, Jeremiah brought God's message to the Jewish people in several parts of Egypt where they had scattered: at Migdol and Tahpanhes in the northeast, at Memphis at the southern end of the Nile Delta, and in the region of Pathros in the south of Egypt. That message said that the cities in Judah had been destroyed because the people there refused to listen to God's servants the prophets, and they did their own wicked will, including worshiping false gods. Then God wanted to know why they were doing the same thing in Egypt; it would only lead to their destruction. They would die by sword and famine. Although they wanted to return to Judah, only a few fugitives would be able to do so. The people who lived in the south region of Pathros made the excuse that things were well with them in Judah when they made offerings to the queen of heaven. It was only after they stopped making offerings to her that the land was destroyed. Do we keep doing the sinful things of the past and make up excuses as to why it is right to do so?

October 27

Toward the end of the book of Jeremiah there is a collection of prophecies against the nations around Judah. God is not just the God of the Israelites; there is only one God, and he is the God of all the world. The first of these prophecies is against the Egyptians. Four years after Pharaoh Neco killed King Josiah, he took his army north to Carchemish on the Euphrates River to help the Assyrians fight against the Babylonians and their king Nebuchadnezzar. The Egyptians were defeated and fled from the battlefield. Jeremiah wrote that in their haste warrior stumbled against warrior and both fell together. Our lives as followers of Jesus are like a battlefield against Satan. If we turn our backs on him and are defeated, fleeing the battle against sin, we not only stumble but also influence other disciples to stumble as well. Sin is like a disease that can spread from person to person. Do we get involved in spiritual battles that are not our own (like the Egyptians did)? Do we flee the battle against sin in defeat? Do we cause others to stumble because of our problems? This would not turn out well.

Jeremiah warned that King Nebuchadnezzar was coming to conquer Egypt some time after its defeat at the Euphrates River. Pharaoh had bragged about how strong an army he had. God said he would be called "Braggart who missed his chance." Do we brag about how strong we are as disciples? The apostle Peter bragged about how he would never desert Jesus. That same night he denied Jesus three times. Sometimes we do not know our own weaknesses. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the one who thinks he stands must pay attention lest he should fall. Do we pay attention to our weaknesses? God told Jeremiah that he was going to bring punishment on the sun god Amon of Thebes in Egypt along with other false gods of the Egyptians. Do we put our trust in the one true God, or in something or someone else?

God said that he would make an end of the nations that had captured Judah, but he would not make an end of the Israelites. Jews still live in the land of Israel. Where are the Assyrians and Babylonians today?

October 28

God gave Jeremiah prophecies against the coastland cities of the Philistines, the cities of Damascus and Hazor (or more correctly, Hatsor), the Arabic tribe of Kedar, and the countries of Elam and Babylon. Closer to Judah were prophecies against the countries of Lot's descendants Moab and Ammon, as well as Edom, which descended from Esau. Moabites had avoided conquest in the past, but their destruction was predicted. Their false god Chemosh was not going to be able to save them, and they would be ashamed of it. The people of Moab had magnified themselves against the Lord. They would become a laughingstock among the nations. When the destruction happened, they would show their sorrow by shaving their heads, cutting off their beards, making gashes on their hands, wearing sackcloth, and making laments. This would happen because Moab had turned its back on shame. The people would be carried into captivity. The Ammonites also would go into captivity, together with their false god Milcom. They would show their sorrow by putting on sackcloth, making laments, and slashing themselves with whips. Do we magnified our country as more important than the Lord? Do we think that the rules and rights that we make up are more important than the ones that God has decreed? Are we sorry for our sins? How do we show sorrow? Have we forgotten how to be ashamed when we do wrong? If we are not ashamed, how can we expect to avoid God's punishment?

Jeremiah said Edom was known for its wisdom. Edomites thought they were safe from destruction because they had hiding places. They had safe places in the clefts of the rock walls and on the heights of the hills. What defenses do we trust in? Do we think that our armaments and technology can save us from God's punishment? Should we not rather trust in God to protect us? But that involves doing his will, not ours.

God told Jeremiah that powerful Babylon would become a wilderness, dry land, and a desert. First destroyed by the Medes and Persians, it is total ruins today after a thousand year decline, fulfilling the prophecy.

October 29

God told Jeremiah that he is taking vengeance on Babylon. He would do to that country what it had done to others, specifically Judah. He said that the king of Assyria had devoured the Israelites, and the king of Babylon had gnawed on their bones. He had punished the king of Assyria, and in the same way he was going to punish the king of Babylon. Do we trust God to take vengeance? He says that vengeance belongs to him. Only he knows how to take it correctly. When people try to take revenge themselves, the result is endless battles and wars for retaliation. Sometimes we tire of God taking vengeance. He does so on his own time scale. It took about fifty years for God to take vengeance on Babylon. But during that time, he raised up a remnant of people in the Babylonian exile who refused to worship idols like their ancestors had done. God wasn't just taking vengeance but also sparing his people so they would worship him alone. He told Jeremiah he would pardon the sins of that remnant. Do we see the hand of God in raising up people to worship him? Do we understand that he is a God who pardons? Are we willing to wait for him to work on his own time schedule?

God told Jeremiah that he was bringing vengeance on Babylon because the Babylonian army had destroyed his temple in Jerusalem. The country of Babylon had arrogantly defied the Lord. They had oppressed the people of Israel and Judah and refused to let their captives go back home. The land was full of images and idols for false gods. Do we understand that God hates idolatry even in distant countries? So he was going to bring the sword of an army against the people of Babylon, against their diviners, warriors, foreign mercenaries, and treasures. God said he would dry up the waters and bring an army from the north against Babylon. He was going to stir up the spirit of the kings of the Medes against them. Ancient historians tell us that the Median army diverted the Euphrates River that ran under the walls of Babylon and marched into the city on the empty river bed. God's prophecy came true. God told Jeremiah that he had not forsaken Israel and Judah even though their land was full of guilt. Do we realize the loving patience of God?

October 30

God told Jeremiah that he is the one who made the earth by his power. He established the world by his wisdom. It was by his understanding that he stretched out the heavens. He is the one who controls the weather: the wind, lightning, and rain. In contrast to this, all the people who make their own gods are senseless and without knowledge. Their idols put them to shame. Their false images cannot breathe and are worthless. The people who make them are deluded. Those false gods are doomed to perish. But the God who formed everything continues forever. We may not make images of God today, but how often do we try to remake God in our image? We declare what he says is wrong to be right and call wrong the things he says are right. We imagine that in doing so we have changed the world. Do we suppose that in our remaking of God in our minds anything actually changes? Are we so senseless and deluded? The world stands as he made it, and his rules that govern the world still work in spite of our imaginations.

God told Jeremiah that Babylon would become a heap of ruins, a den of jackals, and an object of horror with no inhabitants. That didn't happen right away. This prophecy was given about fifty years before the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon. Even so, it remained an important city even until after the time of Christ. Jews that remained in Babylon wrote the Babylonian Talmud in the fifth century A.D. But with the Muslim invasion and establishment of Bagdad nearby, the city became mostly deserted by the ninth century A.D. and merely ruins in the late middle ages. Its location was even lost until archaeologists rediscovered it in the nineteenth century. It took a while for the prophecy to come true, and one can imagine people of earlier times saying that it was a false prophecy. But God works in his own good time, and what he says will happen. He says that Jesus will come again and bring an end to this world. That will be a time for judgment. Almost two thousand years have passed since that prophecy, and people begin to doubt that it will happen. Do we doubt that God's promise of Jesus' return will happen? Do we look forward to his coming again? The prophecy will be fulfilled.

October 31

Four years after the Babylonians had taken King Jehoiachin and many Jews into exile in Babylon, King Zedekiah traveled to Babylon. He took with him the quartermaster Seraiah. Jeremiah wrote all the prophecies that God has given him about Babylon on a scroll and gave it to Seraiah. He told him that when he got to Babylon, he should read the scroll out loud and then tie a rock to it and throw it in the Euphrates River. He should then say that Babylon would sink like the scroll, never to rise again because of the disasters that God would bring on it. In acting out the destruction of the scroll in this way, he was making clear the coming destruction of Babylon. Do we strive to make clear the prophecies that God has given us in his word about the destruction of this world when Jesus comes again? Do we live our lives in a holy and reverent way so that people can see we are serious about the coming end of this world? The apostle Peter makes it clear that we should live like this since this world will be destroyed.

The last chapter of the book of Jeremiah is an account of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians added to the prophecies of Jeremiah. After a year and a half siege, there was no more food in the city for the common people. The Babylonians made a breach in the city wall, and the Jewish King Zedekiah and his army fled toward the Jordan valley. When the Babylonian army caught up with them, the king's army deserted him and scattered. He was captured and taken to King Nebuchadnezzar who killed his sons while he watched and then put his eyes out before taking him to prison. The city of Jerusalem was then set afire, burning the temple, the king's palace, and the fine homes of the rich. All but the poorest people were taken into captivity. This happened because King Zedekiah and the people had done evil in God's sight. Do we realize that a country's immorality can lead to its downfall? Are we living moral lives? But God still cares about his people. The next king of Babylon released King Jehoiachin from prison and had him eat at his table. Do we understand that God can reverse the fortunes of his people who go through suffering? Do we praise him?