

Monday (April 15) – Jeremiah 26, 27

In chapter 26 the prophet Jeremiah is called to stand up and boldly confess the Word of the Lord, even though it will be received poorly and put him at risk of death. The prophet is called to be like Christ—an innocent man willing to die for the truth. This confidence in God’s Word is what all Christians are called to have. When a person is received into membership of an LCMS congregation, he or she is asked: “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?” The response given is, “I do, by the grace of God”, for it is only by the grace of God that we might be granted the boldness to stand upon the Word of God like faithful Jeremiah.

In chapter 27 the Lord declares that He is using Nebuchadnezzar as His servant to rule over and punish the peoples of the earth. While we have no direct revelation from the Lord as to how He is working in the political matters of our world, we can learn from this chapter that there are times when the Lord brings punishment upon people. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to see these times as the Lord disciplining those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). When you experience hardship in your life, it does not necessarily mean that the Lord is angry with you. We must trust in the Lord and His Word through hard times, for He desires to visit us and bring us closer to Him (Jeremiah 27:22).

Tuesday (April 16) – Jeremiah 28, 29

Chapter 28 gives a stern warning against false prophets. Hananiah the false prophet is dealt with harshly because he failed to speak according to the Lord’s Word. In Matthew 7 our Lord speaks about false prophets, telling us: “You will recognize them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16). A person who claims to speak on behalf of the Lord must be judged based on his faithfulness to the revealed Word of God. Whether a friend, a pastor, or an internet theologian, God’s revealed Word of the sacred Scriptures is the final authority for all teaching.

Jeremiah 29:11 is probably the most well-known verse in the entire book of the prophet Jeremiah. It is tempting to read parts of God’s Word, such as this, as if they were written directly to us, as God’s promise to grant us prosperity and a future. But God is not promising here that your new business venture will succeed. This verse was written to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. The prophet encourages them to settle in Babylon and be content where they are because God will take care of the future. Understood in this context, we can see how this passage can properly be applied to us. God has placed us in the “exile” of this sinful world. He wants us to make our homes here and be content with the portion He has given us in life, allowing Him to take care of the future. For we know from other Scripture passages that our eternal future—the future which really matters—is secure.

Wednesday (April 17) – Jeremiah 30

Chapter 30 presents the Lord as the father of His people Israel. They have departed from His ways, so He disciplines them to bring them back to Himself. As a good father, He desires that His children know His great love. Though He disciplines them, His love will carry the day.

Thursday (April 18) – Jeremiah 31

In chapter 31 the Lord promises to turn the mourning of exile into the joy of a new covenant. Though Israel has been taken from their land, such that Rachel's children are no more (v. 15), the days of the new covenant of forgiveness are coming. This was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to rescue us from the exile of sin by His innocent suffering and death, so that, having our sin remembered no more, we might be His own and live under Him in His eternal kingdom.

Friday (April 19) – Jeremiah 32, 33

In chapters 32 and 33, the Lord offers a beautiful promise to the Jews through Jeremiah's purchase of the field: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land" (32:15). Yet this promise is contrasted with the harsh reality of God's judgment against sin: "The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke Me to anger by the works of their hands" (32:30). We should not presume that the Lord will ignore our sin. Sin must be dealt with, for if it remains on our consciences we are doomed eternally, just like the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But thanks be to God that He has raised up our Lord Jesus Christ as a righteous branch from the house of David (33:15) to offer absolution to those who repent: "I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against Me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against Me" (33:8).

Saturday (April 20) – Jeremiah 34

In chapter 34 the Lord proclaims impending slavery because of the failure to observe the laws of releasing slaves every seven years. The Lord desires His people to uphold the dignity and worth of all people—regardless of race, sex, economic status, or any other category. There is no room for partiality of any kind among the people of God, for all men are created in His image and are loved by our Lord Jesus Christ, who went to the cross for the whole world.

Sunday (April 21) – Jeremiah 35, 36

In chapter 35 the Lord uses the example of the Rechabites, who were commanded by their ancestor never to drink wine. Jeremiah tests them by placing wine before them, but they refuse to drink it, maintaining commitment to their father's instruction, thus demonstrating the kind of commitment to the Lord's teaching which He desires all men to have—one where God's people listen and obey rather than question and ignore His commands. The Lord promises to bring disaster upon those who turn from Him to worship other gods.

In chapter 36 the prophet Jeremiah writes words of warning to King Jehoiakim so that he might turn from his evil ways and be forgiven (v. 3). Though the men in the Lord's house receive the Word of the Lord with fear, the king does not. He seeks to kill Jeremiah. There will always be those who oppose God's Word and refuse to listen to Him. The Lord is gracious, but He will not force anyone to turn to Him in faith. Therefore, we must remain humble, lest we become like Jehoiakim.