

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (April 22) – Jeremiah 37

Zedekiah is the final king of the doomed nation of Judah and the third son of Josiah to rule. Unlike his righteous father, Zedekiah follows the example of his wicked brothers and nephew who ruled before him, doing evil in the sight of the Lord. For generations God has called His people to repentance through the prophets, but they have refused to heed His warnings. Now the time of judgment approaches, and it is too late to avert it. Nebuchadnezzar will lay waste to the holy city. Though there is still time for the people of Judah to repent and save their own souls, the city of Jerusalem itself is beyond saving. Jeremiah warns king Zedekiah that he looks in vain to Egypt for help. The king is a weak man, afraid to do his duty and lead the people in public repentance and a return to the Lord. Instead, he comes to Jeremiah secretly while Jeremiah is in prison.

Tuesday (April 23) – Jeremiah 38, 39

Zedekiah allows the wicked princes to bully him into re-imprisoning Jeremiah. But then he secretly allows a servant to rescue Jeremiah from the dungeon. Zedekiah wants the benefits of serving God, but he is unwilling to suffer the wrath of the princes. One day he hands Jeremiah over to them, and the next day he covertly rescues him. This is wickedness. Do not think that you can serve God in your heart only while being afraid to live according to God's word in public. Even though Zedekiah now promises that he will not allow Jeremiah to be reimprisoned, scripture records that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 36:12).

The Lord gives Zedekiah a final warning to surrender to the king of Babylon, the instrument of God's judgment. If he does so, his life will be spared. But Zedekiah refuses and resists, even though he is fighting against God Himself. Zedekiah is captured, blinded, and taken to Babylon. Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar has heard of Jeremiah, and how he urged the king of Judah to surrender. Therefore, he thinks kindly of Jeremiah and sends soldiers to release him from confinement in the court of the prison.

Wednesday (April 24) – Jeremiah 40, 41

The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard frees Jeremiah and gives him leave to go to Babylon or stay with the remnant of Jews in Judah (the poor people who had nothing). Jeremiah chooses to stay with the remnant, led by Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar has appointed governor of Judah. But when Gedaliah is murdered, the remnant makes plans to flee to the supposed safety of Egypt.

Thursday (April 25) – Jeremiah 42, 43

The people come to Jeremiah, asking him to pray to the Lord on their behalf. They promise to serve the Lord, doing everything He commands. The Lord answers that if they will

remain in the land of Judah, He will bless them. However, if they rebel and flee to Egypt, He will utterly destroy them. The people, who had just promised to obey the Lord in all things, immediately conclude that Jeremiah is a false prophet. They are eager to obey the Lord, but only insofar as His will aligns with theirs. How common this behavior is among many who claim to be Christians. “Lord, I will do anything you say—except for the very next time my sinful nature wants to have its own way, and then I’ll do whatever I want. But I’m still a Christian. I still believe in Jesus, right?” Wrong. Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my words” (John 14:15). A man who claims to love Jesus while disregarding His words is no Christian at all. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

Friday (April 26) – Jeremiah 44, 45

God warns the remnant that they too will be destroyed if they harden their hearts as their fathers have done. The remnant answers Jeremiah, “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you” (44:16). The men insist that they were better off serving idols (this is false). The women insist they have only been idolaters with their husbands’ permission (this is true). Therefore, God promises to destroy them all together. The king of Egypt, in whom they seek to take refuge, will also be destroyed.

Chapter 45 is written to Jeremiah’s faithful scribe, Baruch. Baruch is overwhelmed at the severity of God’s judgment. The Lord tells him that even more judgment is coming because of the people’s stubbornness, but Baruch’s own life will be spared.

Saturday (April 27) – Jeremiah 46, 47

The remaining chapters of Jeremiah depart from chronological order, declaring the judgment of the Lord against the nations surrounding Judah. Egypt, a great power in the ancient world, was seen by many as the only answer to the threat of Babylon. The final kings of Judah had relied on treaties with Egypt to protect them from God’s judgment at the hand of Babylon. But the nations and their rulers are appointed by God and no earthly might can oppose His purpose. At the end of Chapter 46, there is a hint of comfort amidst the destruction: “Do not fear, O My servant Jacob... for behold, I will save you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their captivity” (v. 27).

Chapter 47 is an oracle of judgment against the Philistines, whom God will judge by the hand of Pharaoh (before he is judged by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar).

Sunday (April 28) – Jeremiah 48

The people of Moab (and Ammon) are descended from Lot, Abraham’s nephew. Previously, the Lord commanded the Israelites to leave them alone. “Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession.” (Deuteronomy 2:9). These nations are kinsmen to Israel, but now they too must go into captivity for their idolatry. Even so, the final verse of Chapter 47 promises restoration to Moab in the latter days. These latter days will begin in Acts 2, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.