

Week 26

Jeremiah / יְרֵמְיָהוּ / yir meh ya hu

The Lord Exalts

I thought it would be good to hear from Jeremiah after Easter as he is the Prophet of The New Covenant (31:31) Jesus' resurrection inaugurated the age of the New Covenant. Jeremiah's task was to explain to his people why the nation was about to cease to exist – his message was not well received. They wanted optimistic prophets, not authentic and faithful prophets.

I am usually on the edge of my seat when I read Jeremiah. Here's Why...

- He had the toughest task of anyone introduced to us in scripture, who is not named Jesus, so in terms of faithfulness it's a "must read".
- The nation ceased to exist during his ministry, so it is historically fascinating.
- He is the only prophet to bear his soul (transparent/vulnerable). See the 6 Confessions/Laments/Complaints/Outbursts of Jeremiah (six 1st person poems, a type of genre unique to Jeremiah among the prophets. Though we see this genre in the Psalms Lament, of all the Prophets only Jeremiah dares to let us inside. 11:18-23, 12:1-6, 15:10-21, 17:14-18; 18:19-23, and 20:7-13.
- He expressed anger at God regularly, and God gives it right back sometimes.
- He lives, to this day, with a lousy and undeserved nickname: The Weeping Prophet
- He wrote two books – Jeremiah and Lamentations
- He was by far the most creative of the prophets proclaiming the word of the Lord with symbols: a boiling cauldron (1), a potter's marred work (18), a shattered jug (19), an oxen yoke (27), and in a particularly earthy twist a fouled loincloth (underwear) (13)
- He uses wordplay and irony without compromising the message.
- He was generous in the extreme, giving up almost all human friendship to fulfill his task.

Sunday, Apr 17

Jeremiah 1:1-10-2:1-13¹ - The Call

For Reflection: Jeremiah ministry began in 627,² while a faithful king was ruling Judah (Josiah). His ministry continued through the reigns of five kings, until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586. *God had a plan for Jeremiah's life from before his birth, does God have a plan for your life? Can you imagine God ever talking to you like he does to Jeremiah in verse 17?*

Lagniappe: Matthew 4:19

¹ A little help with the almond branch vision which feels very incomplete in the English Bible. In verse 11 "almond tree" = שֶׁמֶשׁ = sha qed, in verse 12 "watching" = שָׁמַר = sho qed. שָׁמַר = sha qed / שָׁמַר = sho qed. It's a bit of divine word play that turns an almond branch into a warning flare.

² Jeremiah 1:1 and 25:3

- Monday, Apr 18** Jeremiah 12:1-6 and 20:7-18 – The Soul
For Reflection: Jeremiah is the only prophet who allows a look inside the prophet’s heart. Sometimes God responds (12:5-6) sometimes the lament stands alone (20:7-18). *What do you like or dislike about the soul of this prophet? What do you like or dislike about God’s response to Jeremiah in 12:5-6? Do you express your innermost thoughts to God?*
Lagniappe: Psalm 69:1-3
- Tuesday, Apr 19** Jeremiah 18³ – The Potter
For Reflection: *Who are you the potter or the clay? When have you been punished for doing the right thing, or grown tired of doing the right thing?*
Lagniappe: Isaiah 29:16 Romans 9:20-21
- Wednesday, Apr 20** Jeremiah 23- The Shepherds
For Reflection: *What traits/abilities are most import to you in a spiritual leader? What do you look for to discern between a good shepherd or bad shepherd, a true prophet or false prophet?*
Lagniappe: John 10: 7-16
- Thursday, Apr 21** Jeremiah 25 - The Way
For Reflection: Turn/return is one of Jeremiah’s favorite words, we see Jeremiah use the word in verse 5. *In what areas of life are you running toward God? running away from God?*
Lagniappe: James 4:8 and Isaiah 55:6
- Friday, Apr 22** Jeremiah 29:1-14 - The Promise
For Reflection: The oft quoted promise in vs 11 will be realized 70 years⁴ after the exiles received it from Jeremiah. It was a promise for their children’s children. When has God brought you back home (restored something that was lost)?
Lagniappe: Luke 19:10
- Saturday, Apr 23** Jeremiah 30-31 - The Book of Comfort
For Reflection: This (30-31) is a book within a book. Mostly poetic promises of restoration in 70 years. The book of comfort ends with a series of three eschatological promises, each of which begins with the words, “The days are surely coming...” (27, 31, and 38). *How have you experienced the promise of the new covenant (31:31-37)? How has God changed your mind and heart (33)? Which of your sins has God forgotten (31)?*
Lagniappe: Matthew 26:28 or the whole passage 26:17-30

³ A visual sermon, that clarifies God’s sovereignty, is not well received, and ends with another lament.

⁴ 29:10, hence the encouragement to settle in as seen in 4-6