

Grace OPC Sunday Class – Bible Survey			
Year:	3 of 4		Date: Week 5
Quarter:	2 of 4	Bible Survey	
Lesson Title:	Survey of Jeremiah and Lamentations		
Lesson Purpose:	To understand the structure and contents of Jeremiah and Lamentations and look at some of their main themes		

### 1. Review

What kind of language is used in the prophets? Visionary.

How should we interpret? Take prophets as symbolical unless it is clear that they are meant to be taken literally

The prophets behaved as lawyers of the Old Covenant

Reminding people of the blessings and/or curses that were coming because they had failed to abide by the stipulations in the covenant.

### 2. Who Wrote Jeremiah, and When?

Authorship of Jeremiah is supported internally and externally

**Jeremiah 36:4** Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD which He had spoken to him.

**Jeremiah 36:32** Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the son of Neriah, the scribe, and he wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them.

The prophecy is also referred to in Daniel 9:2, 2 Chronicles 36:21, Ezra 1:1, Matthew 2:17-18, Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46. It is also quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12

Josephus and the Apocrypha confirm the book.

Jeremiah's ministry took place during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, kings of Judah, from about 626 to 586 BC

### 3. Historical Background to the Book of Jeremiah

Reformation from idolatry beginning under King Josiah as Jeremiah receives his call

He was very reticent about his call

Rediscovery of the Book of the Law

Redoubled outward efforts to purge land of idolatry but their hearts were not committed to it  
Josiah tragically killed in a battle with Egypt

The people put Jehoahaz on the throne but Pharaoh deposed him and installs Jehoiakim

Jehoiakim thus came to the throne during a period of Egyptian rule following defeat of Josiah

He led Judah back into idolatry, but the people felt secure as long as the temple stood (7:1-7)

Jeremiah's prophecy brought him into conflict with the people (26:8-9)

Babylon defeats Egypt and Judah; Judah becomes subservient to Babylon

After 3 years paying tribute to Babylon, Jehoiakim rebels

Jeremiah's prophecies are read to the Jehoiakim, who cuts them up and burns them

Comes under a terrible curse as a result

Judah's destruction is now certain. Not even Moses or Samuel could have prevented it

Jehoiakim's reign is ended and Jehoiachin his son lasts 3 months before being taken to Babylon

Zedekiah is made king but doesn't keep his promise of submission to Babylon

So Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem and captures it.

Eventually, Jeremiah refuses honor in Babylon and ministers to a group who ran to Egypt

Even though God had told them to remain in Judah.

#### 4. Structure for Jeremiah (from Hendriksen)

It is important to note that the book is not arranged chronologically

Instead, tends to jump backwards and forwards in time – can tell by references to reigning king

Chapter	Content
1-3	<b>Jeremiah's Call: Judah's Idolatry Condemned</b>
4-6	<b>Evil Heart Condemned</b>
7-10, 45	<b>Remaining chapters of the roll of Baruch:</b> chapter 7 containing the famous temple discourse; chapters 8-10, additional prophecies of Jeremiah which were included in the roll when it was rewritten. Chapter 45 is held by some to have been a subscript of Baruch at the end of chapters 1-7 (the original roll, which was burned by Jehoiakim).
11-17	<b>Even Moses and Samuel cannot avert Judah's approaching doom.</b>
18-36	<b>Miscellaneous prophecies pertaining to different periods</b> (chs. 25, 26 and 35, 36, pertain to the early period of the reign of Jehoiakim). <b>Messiah's coming predicted</b> (ch. 23, the Righteous Branch); <b>the 70 years and Judah's Restoration</b> (chs. 30, 31); <b>the New Covenant</b> (ch 31).
37-44	<b>Interesting and consecutive account of Jeremiah's activities and experiences during the last part of Jerusalem's siege and thereafter</b>
46-51	<b>Against the nations, oracles</b>
52	<b>Historical Appendix</b> (cf. II Kings 25)

#### 5. Some major themes from Jeremiah

God hates idolatry and will not accept outward reform

**Jeremiah 4:3** For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

We cannot put our trust in traditions and past glory (eg. the temple) and assume all will be well

**Jeremiah 7:1** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, **2** "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house and proclaim there this word and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the LORD!' " **3** Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. **4** "Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.' **5** "For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, **6** if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, **7** then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

The Righteous Branch will come – the Lord our Righteousness

**Jeremiah 23:5** "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. **6** "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

**Jeremiah 33:15** 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. **16** 'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is *the name* by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.'

The Glory of the New Covenant foreseen

**Jeremiah 31:31** "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. **33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **34** "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The example of Jeremiah

- Weeping over the coming destruction
- Prophesying it and being threatened by the people he loved and longed to see saved
- Ministry largely unheeded over 40 years!
- Having to prophesy submission to the Babylonians – thought of as a traitor

- Refusing to be honoured in Babylon but instead going to an uncertain end in Egypt with the still rebellious men of Judah

## 6. Who Wrote Lamentations, and When?

Almost universally believed to be the work of Jeremiah

The Septuagint actually ascribes the book to him in a note prefixed to the first chapter

Seems to have been written soon after the destruction of the city

## 7. Structure for Lamentations

Hendriksen divides the book into dirges and laments

Dirges (funeral songs) in which the lot of Jerusalem is bewailed – figuratively, the daughter of Zion has died

Laments (in which the authors own sufferings, which he may share with others, is related

Chapter	Content
1	Dirge. Zion's desolate condition
2	Dirge. The Author of this desolate condition – Jehovah
3	Lament. Personal sorrow with hope of relief
4	Dirge. The bitter siege which resulted in this desolate condition
5	Lament. Collective sorrow with a prayer for relief

## 8. Major Themes in the Book of Lamentations

Laments not only the suffering but the sin that brought it about

**Lamentations 1:5** Her adversaries have become her masters, Her enemies prosper; For the LORD has caused her grief Because of the multitude of her transgressions; Her little ones have gone away As captives before the adversary.

Although there is suffering, there is hope with God

**Lamentations 3:19** Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. **20** Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me. **21** This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. **22** The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. **23** *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. **24** "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." **25** The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. **26** *It is* good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD. **27** *It is* good for a man that he should bear The yoke in his youth. **28** Let him sit alone and be silent Since He has laid *it* on him. **29** Let him put his mouth in the dust, Perhaps there is hope. **30** Let him give his cheek to the smiter, Let him be filled with reproach. **31** For the Lord will not reject forever, **32** For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.

Hard to read some of the words without thinking of Christ

It does not all apply, but here is a man who knows what it is like to suffer God's wrath for sin

And feels the bitterness of sin and being shut out from God and in darkness

Much of this was Christ's experience in our place on the Cross

**Lamentations 1:12** "Is it nothing to all you who pass this way? Look and see if there is any pain like my pain Which was severely dealt out to me, Which the LORD inflicted on the day of His fierce anger. **13** "From on high He sent fire into my bones, And it prevailed *over them*. He has spread a net for my feet; He has turned me back; He has made me desolate, Faint all day long. **14** "The yoke of my transgressions is bound; By His hand they are knit together. They have come upon my neck; He has made my strength fail. The Lord has given me into the hands Of *those against whom* I am not able to stand.

Tradition says Jeremiah wrote these words in a cave overlooking the site of the crucifixion.

**Lamentations 3:1** I am the man who has seen affliction Because of the rod of His wrath. **2** He has driven me and made me walk In darkness and not in light. **3** Surely against me He has turned His hand Repeatedly all the day. **4** He has caused my flesh and my skin to waste away, He has broken my bones. **5** He has besieged and encompassed me with bitterness and hardship. **6** In dark places He has made me dwell, Like those who have long been dead. **7** He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy. **8** Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer. **9** He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked. **10** He is to me like a bear lying in wait, *Like* a lion in secret places. **11** He has turned aside my ways and torn me to pieces; He has made me desolate. **12** He bent His bow And set me as a target for the arrow. **13** He made the arrows of His quiver To enter into my inward parts. **14** I have become a laughingstock to all my people, Their *mocking* song all the day. **15** He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drunk with wormwood. **16** He has broken my teeth with gravel; He has made me cower in the dust. **17** My soul has been rejected from peace; I have forgotten happiness. **18** So I say, "My strength has perished, And *so has* my hope from the LORD." **19** Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness.