

8073U

GLENLOCK BIBLE CAMP - 2002

JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

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Study #3: Jeremiah - The man of contentions  
Exhortation 1

Reading: Jeremiah 15, 19 and 20

Brother chairman and my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, in the patient waiting for Christ.

We started yesterday with the words of James, where James says to us, 'take my brethren the prophets, who have spoken unto you in the name of the LORD, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience'. James says moreover, take those prophets as an example of suffering affliction of patience, 'lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds'. Then he immediately connects the prophets with Job, for his next words are, 'ye have heard of the patience of Job, and you've seen the end of the Lord that He's of tender mercy and very pitiful'. But, b&s, with those words ringing in our ears, we're going to take this morning one of the great suffering prophets of God, who courageously spoke in the name of the LORD, but went through great troughs of sadness, who was mocked, who was scourged, who was delivered as the lamb to the slaughter, in his own words, and we're going to remember one centuries after Jeremiah, who was to go through similar grief and similar suffering for speaking the Word of God.

In all the things that I read about Jeremiah, the best summary I came across was this: 'No prophet of God was at once more sure of his words, but at the same time was so unsure of himself', and that greatly encapsulates what Jeremiah and his experience was all about. No prophet of God was at once more sure of his words, but at the same time so unsure of himself, and we're going to see and explore that conundrum this morning, as we try and get into the mind of Jeremiah, in the times of his sufferings. You see, in public, Jeremiah was very courageous, absolutely fearless and uncompromising; he delivered a harsh message to those that did not want to hear it. He condemned Josiah's sons, he condemned his own family, he spoke against priests and against prophets alike, and he spared nobody; and as a result he suffered terribly. There were beatings, imprisonments, the stocks, mockings and finally a death sentence that we'll look at next Sunday morning, God willing. Yet for all that harshness, he was a very soft man. He was a man who was moved easily to tears; he said, 'the tears run down my face for the sins of my people', and he felt great pain at the knowledge that the nation would surely perish. Also he was greatly ashamed of the mockings and the scorn and the biting

words of the false prophets that were heaped upon him. This morning we have a chance to explore what that did to Jeremiah, and we're going to see why it is that James links Jeremiah and the prophets and Job together.

You see, they both had the problem of dealing with unexpected suffering. When the unexpected suffering comes upon us, those are the moments that we can tend to question God, to resent why it is that those who try to do the right thing, find themselves afflicted, find themselves derided, find themselves suffering; perhaps we might learn from Jeremiah and from Job the path to understanding trial.

It's very interesting to consider the relationship between Jeremiah and his God. You see, Jeremiah like all of us started in life with great assurances; we saw in chapter 1, the angel said to him, 'I am with you, Jeremiah to deliver thee'; God had said to Jeremiah, 'I will be with you and with your remnant. I will not suffer the enemy which cometh into this city, to touch thee'. What was left unsaid, of course, was that those in the city, his own brethren would afflict him; but God said he will still be alive when the city falls and you will survive. So he had that assurance that he would survive right to the end of the fall of the city. What he didn't realize was that there was a pathway of suffering between his call and the fall of the city. I guess when most of us started off our walk in the truth, our minds were resonating with all the divine assurances that God gives; 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee', 'not even a sparrow can fall without the Father's knowledge, and you are of more value than many sparrows'. We start out, don't we? that God and His angels are with us, caring for us, and yet so often on the pathway of life, things go terribly wrong; our lives are shattered by disasters we never anticipated. We go into valleys of grief and misery, and sometimes we feel like Job, completely perplexed as to why this should be happening to us, and we wonder where God is!

You see, Jeremiah had all those assurances when he started, but soon he began to question God. You know, his particular task was very, very severe; when we come to chapter 20, you'll see he says in verse 8, 'For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil', and he kept crying out that, and it says in chapter 26, just come to Jeremiah 26 verse 2. This was the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the good years of Josiah were over, the easy days were gone; 'In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim', now this was very likely the coronation ceremony for Jehoiakim, because it was a time in verse 2, when people were coming from all over the Land, to worship in the house of Yahweh. So very likely it was Jehoiakim's coronation ceremony, and God sent him down to the court of Yahweh's house, verse 2, 'speak to all the people that come to worship in that house, all the words I command thee, **diminish not a word**'. Look at verse 3, it's all about the evil of their doings, you can imagine, can't you? on the coronation of the king, it's the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, everybody's there to worship and to enjoy the ceremony and here's a man standing at the gate of the temple and calling them all evil and threatening dire judgments upon them. He was not allowed to diminish one word! It all had to be said, and said publicly, and against kings and false prophets and people, against corrupt practices, it had to be said. But you know, b&s, we

have to be very careful in our ecclesial circles that we don't get intimidated into going quiet because people don't want to hear the things that have to be said. The divine standards of morality and justice, the divine standards of holiness don't change with the time, and it may be our lot to have to get up and say like Jeremiah, 'this is the way God sees it, and what you're doing is not right'. Be sure that the flesh will react, the flesh does not like to be reminded of divine principles, and as Jeremiah was attacked, there will be retaliation! it always happens! But we can't diminish a word, can we? because it's what God has revealed.

You see, Jeremiah had also another problem, he was constantly prophesying the doom of the city. That brought him into conflict with the strong sense of nationalism that the Jews have always have had; 'we are God's chosen people, we are Abraham's see, we are the kingdom of God on the earth', 'how can God destroy this place?' and Jeremiah found himself accused of treason, of desertion to the enemy, of disloyalty. You imagine how the princes felt when they later found out that Jeremiah had sent letters to Babylon to the captives in Babylon, urging them to pray for the peace of Babylon. What sort of traitor would they have thought him to be? He wrote to them and said, 'pray for the peace of Babylon because you're going to be there for 70 years'. Think of how they felt when Jeremiah advocated surrender to the enemy; he kept saying right to the day the walls fell, 'we have to surrender; God will spare us if we go out and surrender to the Babylonians'. The armed men inside the city, found that to be utterly treasonous, you see, Jeremiah was attacking not only their **evil ways**, he was attacking their **national pride**, and he made himself very unpopular!

I want to just take a quick tour of some of the reactions that Jeremiah got to his preaching. Come to chapter 9, these are interesting because, not only do we see the reaction of the flesh to being challenged, but we also see the way that God deals with Jeremiah. That's very instructive: we get some idea of the grief of Jeremiah in verse 1 of chapter 9, 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people'. That's almost the Lord Jesus Christ weeping over Jerusalem, isn't it? but there's the tremendous emotions of Jeremiah, sharing the frustration of God that they were not listening, and that slaughter was eminent. But look what God says to him in verse 4, this is God's advice to Jeremiah, 'Jeremiah, I know you're crying for them but watch out for your back: Take ye heed every one of his neighbour' (I'll read it to you from the NIV in verse 4, 'beware of your friends, don't even trust your brethren for every brother is a deceiver'). In verse 6 he says, 'thy habitation is in the midst of deceit', (the NIV has, 'you live in the midst of deceivers and deception'). You see, God was warning Jeremiah about the response he was going to get!

Come to chapter 11 and verse 18, you see, there was a plot in his hometown and God revealed the conspiracy of the men of Anathoth against Jeremiah. Incredible language, verse 18, 'Yahweh hath given me the knowledge of it, and I knew it, and Thou showedst me thy doings. But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me'. You see, there was this deception,

there was this plotting going on behind the scenes, and more likely what had happened was that the nobles and princes in Jerusalem said to the men of Anathoth, 'he's one of yours, you fix him up; he's a troublemaker you get rid of him'. So the men of Anathoth, began to conspire against Jeremiah and they were devising devices: look what they were saying!

'Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof', we're going to chop down the whole lot, there's no good just saying to Jeremiah, go quiet, we've got to cut him off completely so he'll never speak again. 'Let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.' Now isn't that fascinating? We're going to end up this morning with Jeremiah's eternal inheritance. The men of Anathoth said, 'we will get rid of him, and he will never, ever be remembered in the earth'. But look what God said to them, (I want to read verse 20 because you'll notice in all these passages, Jeremiah refers to his own heart; he was very conscious of his heart, 'but Yahweh of hosts that judges righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto Thee have I revealed my cause'. And here's God's response in verse 21, 'Therefore thus saith Yahweh of the men of Anathoth, that seek your life, Jeremiah, saying, Prophecy not in the name of Yahweh that thou die not by our hand: Therefore saith Yahweh of hosts, I will punish them: the young men will die by the sword: their sons and their daughters shall die by famine. And there **shall be no remnant of them**'. One of the very first cities that the Babylonians wiped out, completely and utterly, was Anathoth. They sought to remove Jeremiah's name from the earth, and by the time of the siege, there was no one left in Anathoth. Why do you think that Uncle Hanameel came to Jeremiah and said, 'You're the only one left that can buy the field', because the rest of them were dead! and you see, God saw the men of Anathoth plotting against Jeremiah, 'a prophet is not without honour, said Jesus, **except** in his home town'. So God sought out the men of Anathoth for their deception.

Chapter 12 we looked at last night, but let's just note it again! Jeremiah's complaint against God in verse 1, 'Righteous art Thou, O God' (I know you're righteous) when I plead with Thee: (but I want to question something) I want to talk about your judgments (and here he comes in with the words of Asaph from Psalm 73) 'Why do the wicked prosper? (God, I know you're righteous but I just can't understand why they get away with this!) 'why are they happy that deal very treacherously? You know, they have planted and taken root: they bring forth fruit, they talk about you but they don't have you in their heart; why do they prosper?'

Now you see, he's questioning God; but look at verse 3 again, and it's amazing how often Jeremiah comes back and reflects on his own conscience. 'But O Yahweh, Thou knowest me; you've seen me and you've tried my heart towards Thee; call them out like sheep to the slaughter'. You see, I'm the lamb going to the slaughter but they ought to be! The response in verse 5, Jeremiah, 'you thought running against footmen was hard, well, try horses; you thought running on the plain and level ground in the days of Josiah was difficult, well, now you're going to be running through the forests of Jordan with the lions and the snakes at your heels; it's going to get worse, Jeremiah, get back to work; gird up your loins'. Then in verse 6, Jeremiah, your own family are going to turn

against you, verse 6, 'For even thy brethren, thine own kinsmen, the house of your father (you see, it wasn't just now the men of Anathoth, his own relatives turned on him, and you can trace his own cousins who betrayed him); I have dealt treacherously with thee, and I have called a multitude after thee, believe them not though they speak fair words'. They came to Jeremiah with all these propositions about the priesthood and he was not to listen to a word of it, because it was all a trap. See how alone he felt?

Come to chapter 17. You know, this is just a selection of the occasions where Jeremiah goes before God to complain about his lot! and where God's response is always the same, 'get on with the job, Jeremiah'. Jeremiah 17 verse 13, just cast your eye on verses 9 and 10, there's the same thing, the heart is deceitful. 'Yahweh searches the heart and tries the reins' (Jeremiah was so conscious of the fact that his heart was on show before God). But come down to verse 13, and here's his plea against God. 'Oh, Yahweh, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee **shall be ashamed**'. So you see, there were those that forsook God but they did that by forsaking Jeremiah, and there had been many that had been his friends that had turned against him, because he goes on to say, 'and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth.' So those that forsook God were doing both forsaking and departing from Jeremiah and their names are written in the earth for a testimony that they will be judged, because they have forsaken Yahweh, the fountain of living waters'. That was the great tragedy, they had taken away from God. Look at chapter 18 verse 14, that was God's challenge! 'Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which comes from the rock of the field? the glorious crystal clear water that melts down from Mount Hermon? Would a man leave that? shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? But My people have forgotten Me, and I was right leaving a wonderful cool clear spring of mountain water to go up and wander in the desert, to leave God. That's how God saw it! and Jeremiah picks that up, 'they've forsaken Thee, the fountain of living waters'.

But look at his self consciousness in chapter 17 verse 14, 'Heal me, O Yahweh, and I shall be healed'; he realized he was not right in his thinking, and he kept praying for God to affect his heart in the right way. 'Save me and I shall be saved, for Thou art my praise! Then he comes back to the complaint in verse 15, 'Behold, they say unto me, where is the word of Yahweh, let it come now', and as we pointed out yesterday, he had been courageously preaching for 22 years **and not one thing came to pass**. You imagine the field day the false prophets had: Jeremiah, you said this would happen! you said that would happen; you said this would happen! who said the Babylonians are a threat, but they're not here yet, are they? You said Egypt would be useless to trust in, but Egypt is supporting us, where's the word of Yahweh? you're a false prophet, Jeremiah; and they threw it back in his mouth. Who do you think you are? none of your prophecies have come to pass, and he gets depressed in verse 16. He reminds God that he was happy being a shepherd, I didn't want the woeful day, you know that! 'That which came out of my lips, was right before Thee' (I've done what you've said, but you're a terror unto me; you should be my hope in the day of evil). 'Let them be confounded' in verse 18, and he's praying for God to sort out his enemies and look how God deals with him. Is God sympathetic? does God say, 'poor Jeremiah, look, you need

a holiday!' No, He says in verse 19, 'Go and stand in the gate, Jeremiah, where the kings of Judah come in and you tell them to keep the Sabbath properly; you go and rebuke even the kings'. Get back to work, Jeremiah, there's work to be done! Now we might think that God's hard but sometimes life is like that, b&s, we have to get up and keep on going, even when we feel miserable.

The next thing was the prophecy of the potter's house, which is a well known chapter in chapter 18, but notice the reaction he got, in verse 18, to the prophecy of the potter's house. Chapter 18 verse 18, 'Then said **they**, Come let us devise devices against Jeremiah'. Can you imagine going through year after year of plots, planning, trickery, deception, devices, schemes, everybody plotting to get rid of you! that's an incredible pressure on a man, and why were they doing that? Well they said, 'the Law shall not perish from the priest', ( he's condemning the priests and **they are the servants of God**) and 'all the counsel from the wise'; there are all these old men, who are listening to Jeremiah, (he's a young upstart)! 'Nor the word from the prophet' (we have more prophets than Jeremiah); come, let us smite him for his tongue (as the margin correctly says), we're sick of his words, we got to get rid of him because we don't want to hear what he's got to say!' So Jeremiah prays, 'Give **heed unto me, O God**', verse 20, 'shall evil be recompensed for good; Thou digged a pit for my soul; remember I stood before Thee to speak good unto them and to turn Thy wrath away', and he's praying to God, 'Look, all I'm getting is trouble; I'm getting hated and plotted against because I spoke your word!

God's response - chapter 19 verse 1, 'get on with the work, Jeremiah; go down to the potter's house'. No sympathy from God! 'get on with the work Jeremiah, go down and say this to them!' and the terrible prophecy of the valley of Tophet was given in chapter 19 , have a look at verse 9 and just see how serious the problem was, 'I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they shall seek their lives', and God said, 'when you've said that, when you've told them what terrible things are coming, smash the pot in front of their faces and say, verse 11, 'even thus will I break the people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury'. Do you see what unpopular prophecies these would be? stinging words! and the reaction came in chapter 20.

Pashur the priest, now Pashur was responsible for the functions of the temple. He was chief governor of the house of Yahweh. The preceding chapters had been done by Jeremiah in the precincts of the temple. Pashur now thought it was his job to silence Jeremiah once and for all. The name 'Pashur' which is critical to this chapter means 'liberated or set free' (6583), that's absolutely critical to the understanding of this chapter. **Liberated or set free** that's what his name means, you might read some of this into his character, but his name means liberated or set free. Now Pashur the son of Immer was chief governor and he heard Jeremiah prophesy these things, that was a direct response to the prophecy of the potter's house, and the prophecy of the broken

vessel, a direct response. Then in verse 2, Pashur **smote** Jeremiah, now the word 'smote' is a great understatement, it means '**scourged**' (5221) it was the 39 stripes, it was the lacerating of the back, until it was just a lump of bleeding meat; he scourged Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks. This is Acts 16, isn't it? Paul and Silas, scourged and put in the stocks; but you see, he didn't put Jeremiah in a dungeon, he stuck him out in the gate of Benjamin. Now why would he do that? well, the gate of Benjamin was the gate of Jerusalem that went to his hometown. You see, Pashur wanted Jeremiah's own people who would be going in and out of the gate of Benjamin to laugh at him. The whole idea of the stocks was, that you were completely helpless as you hung there, you couldn't do anything for your back that was giving you all kinds of agonies, and there would be a shock reaction set in (when you have been scourged, men go into shock and you start to tremble and you feel the cold) and Jeremiah was there for a day and a night in the stocks, look at verse 3. 'It came to pass on the morrow', so all the rest of the day after he was scourged, all through the night, he's in the stocks. Now the cold descends at night, and here's a man with his back in ribbons, not only mocked and derided but suffering incredibly through shock and cold and pain and cramps, and you can do nothing about it when you're in the stocks. The whole idea of the stocks was to break a man's resolve. They thought when they got to him in the morning, he would be much more amenable, so in the morning they drag him out of the stocks, and Pashur's got all his friends standing around to hear him humiliate Jeremiah. Now we know his friends were there, because they're very directly mentioned in verse 4 and verse 6, 'you and your friends', so here was a ceremony to make fun of Jeremiah. That's what it was all about!

But before Pashur can say one word, Jeremiah climbs into it! in the most courageous way. Here's a man that's just been scourged once, all night in the stocks, probably feeling utterly and totally physically miserable, and he's straight into Pashur: look what he says, 'Pashur, Yahweh doesn't call your name '**set free**', do you know what Yahweh calls you, Pashur? He calls you '**Magor-Missabib**' (and the margin's right) '**fear round about**' (4036); you think you're 'set free' but I'm telling you, you're going to be the most incredibly fearful person. Everywhere you go you'll be worried about things happening to you; and I'll tell you, Pashur, how it's going to happen! 'Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself', you have brought upon yourself, Pashur, the worst of fear. All your friends that are here to laugh at me, are going to suffer with you. 'They shall fall by the sword of thine enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword'. You're going to go to Babylon and have your heads chopped off! 'Moreover I will deliver this city, verse 5, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things, and the treasures of the kings, will all be taken away'. But look at verse 6, 'But you Pashur, and all that dwell in your house shall go into captivity: and you'll come to Babylon and you're going to die in Babylon, Pashur, and you'll be buried there. Not in the sepulchres of your fathers, you're going to die and be buried in Babylon; you and all your friends to whom you prophesied lies'.

Now isn't that a courageous statement? It sorts him out really well! You imagine what

they did to him - you know we know one thing that happened to him - we read about it in verse 10. You know, when Jeremiah fell apart after this incident, he said to God in verse 10, of some of the things that they had said to him, after his courageous confronting of Pashur. He said in verse 10, 'I heard the defaming of many' and what were they saying? well, let me read to you from the literal Hebrew of verse 10, 'I heard the defaming of many, he said, **fear round about**, oh, that's what you're saying, Jeremiah'; you see, they were responding to what he said to Pashur; and you can imagine after the initial shock when they heard the words of Jeremiah, they began to mock him again! **Fear round about**, Jeremiah, **denounce** instead of the word 'report' (5046) (that's a terrible translation) **denounce us**, Jeremiah, come on, say some more, and we'll denounce you! Come on, Jeremiah, say something else and we'll catch you out in your words; 'all my familiars watch for my halting, saying, peradventure he will be enticed (he'll be tricked, we'll get him to say something outrageous that we can hang him on; come on, Jeremiah, speak up and say some more) 'and we'll prevail against him and take our revenge'. Denounce us and we'll denounce you-let's hear more of this fear roundabout stuff. Say something treasonous so we can take you off and get the king to kill you!

Do you think this wasn't a type of the Lord Jesus Christ? You come to Luke 11 and verse 53, (just keep your hand there in Jeremiah) and come to Luke 11 verse 53, isn't it amazing how people can get together against those who speak the Word of God? Luke 11 verse 53 says this, 'As He said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently and to provoke Him to speak of many things: Laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him'. Jeremiah was going through exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ would go through with His enemies: 'come on, say something more; we'll catch Him out in His words; we'll get a treasonous charge against Him'. That's exactly what Jeremiah was put through by Pashur and his friends. Then I believe, they probably threw him back in the dungeon and said, 'Jeremiah, we'll deal with you later'.

Now, b&s, the rest of chapter 20, is the **mental collapse** that Jeremiah goes through, after this incident with Pashur and his friends. We stand back in absolute awe of his courage in a time of great physical suffering, to be so courageous and to stand up to Pashur and his friends in the way that he did! But they mocked him unmercifully afterwards. They provoked him to say many things, then they left him alone with his own depression. Now I'm going to suggest to you that the rest of this chapter needs to be slightly rearranged.

You see, verse 7 to verse 13, is the process that Jeremiah goes through to restore his spirituality; verses 14 to 18 actually belong between verse 6 and verse 7. You know, after they had mocked him and had thrown him back in the dungeon, he was utterly and totally depressed. So let's just go to verse 14 and pick up the low moment that he got into! I believe these last 4 or 5 verses are an appendix just showing how low Jeremiah had got. You see, by verse 13, he was singing unto God, he had restored himself spiritually, but this is the **low thoughts**, the moment of depression. This is the wrong attitude that he got into, when he was left alone and his courage failed him. Then as you



read verses 14 to 18, you'll see why it is that James puts the prophets and Job together. 'You've heard of the patience of Job, 'cursed be the day that I was born' and verses 14 to 18 is verbatim of Job 3; Jeremiah has resorted exactly to the thoughts of Job. 'Cursed be the day that I was born; verse 15, 'Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father; verse 16, 'why didn't God destroy me from the womb'? 'why came I out of the womb to see sorrow and labour and be consumed with shame? and you see, it was the shame that was consuming him, he was absolutely and totally now lost of all his resources; 'I'm consumed with shame', he said, and there was the low moments, identifying with Job in his agonies of injustice, (why should it happen to me?). So we come back to verse 7 and we see how he got himself out of that trough of despair.

Now when we come to Jeremiah 20 verse 7, he actually accuses God of deceiving him. I've heard a number of talks over the years where brethren have got up and said, 'well, look, you can't accuse God of deceiving you'; that's exactly what Jeremiah said to God! No more could Jeremiah do that legally than to say to God in verse 9, 'I'm not going to say anymore of you words'. He was in a bad frame of mind, but we have the process by which he got out of it. Now he starts off in verse 7, 'Yahweh, you have deceived me; you said, that you would deliver me; you said that you would be a wall around me; you said that it was going to be a very quick time; you're going to hasten your word to perform it; and none of that's happened and I've been lead up the garden path. I was deceived! you're stronger than me and you prevailed, and I've ended up in derision daily, everyone mocketh me'. He repeats that in the end of verse 8, 'I'm a derision daily'; b&s, we all hate being mocked and derided. You know, sometimes it's worse that physical suffering. You see, what mocking and derision does is that it attacks our self respect and we start to doubt ourselves when so many people are criticizing and tearing us apart, we start to wonder if there is something wrong with us? It's so hard not to retaliate when we are derided. The great strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, was to suffer the unjust things that were said about Him. 'When He was reviled, He reviled not again', says Peter; that was His great strength, to say nothing in the face of that unfair criticism and it is so hard to do. 'The word of God, in verse 8, Jeremiah says, 'is made an reproach unto me'; and they were throwing it back in his face, 'come on, let's hear more of this stuff! We'll catch you out, you'll make a mistake in a minute!'

He'd had enough! so he said in verse 9, 'I'm not going to speak anymore, it's no good! I'm not going to make any mention of God, I'm not going to speak anymore in His name'. But he couldn't do it; you can't do that! if the word of God is burning inside of you, it must come out. Jeremiah found that out; 'it was like a burning fire shut up in my bones'. If anyone here has ever had sciatica you know what that's like! a fire inside your bones; and Jeremiah's like that, he's got this fire going on in his bones and it has to be given expression. 'I could not stay', well, how did he get back to spirituality? Well, look at verse 11, 'But Yahweh is with me as a terrible mighty One; therefore, my persecutors shall stumble, they shall not prevail, they shall be greatly ashamed, they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten', and they are all the things that he had thought about in those previous chapters we looked at. **Shame, prospering, prevailing, confusion**, all of those things he'd mentioned before, he says,

it's all going to come upon them one day.

But look at his attitude in verse 12. 'But, O Yahweh of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto Thee have I opened my cause'. That's how he got through it, b&s, that's how he got through the time of depression, that's how he got through the thoughts of verse 14 to 18. He says, I've opened it up to God, I've put it in God's hands and like Asaph when he thought about God and what God was all about, he knew that the wicked would come to their end one day; they would not always get away with these things. So he pleaded for God to sort out his own heart. You know, Job in the midst of his persecutions had exactly the same thoughts. You know, Job said in Job 23 verse 10, 'I look for God on the left hand, and I can't find Him; I look for Him on the right hand and I can't find Him; behind me and before me and I can't find God in all my persecutions. But I know this, said Job, 'that when He has tried me, I will come forth as gold'. We've got to hang on to that conviction, b&s, when we don't understand why things are happening to us, why we should be suffering; we have to hang on to the conviction that God is trying us and we'll come out like gold. That's the conviction that Jeremiah had!

So in verse 13, like Paul and Silas, after their experience in the stocks, 'Sing unto Yahweh and praise Yahweh. For He has delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers'. Now he has restored himself to confidence, and that's the process that we must all go through in times of despair. There will be times that we feel like he felt in verses 14 to 18, we'd wish that we'd never been born! Totally unable to see what God's doing in our lives. We have to go through that same process and get on with the work.

Jeremiah went on with that work, right to the end of the 40 years. I want to finish up this morning by coming to the last two years of his imprisonment. Come to chapter 32, you know, Hebrews links together the cruel mockings and the scourgings and the imprisonments, in Hebrews 11 verse 36, which I believe is Jeremiah's verse. When we come to Jeremiah 32, we have that last 2 years, some of the dark moments of his imprisonments. We'll look closer at one of those next Sunday morning. We have an occasion here when he was shut up in the court of the prison in the time of siege. The city was becoming very hungry, they were beginning to eat their own children; the city was about to fall and would be wiped away. We have the dating of this prophecy in verse 2, 'Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison within the king of Judah's house and the siege was on'. So we have the prophecy dated, and in the midst of all the gloom that was about to descend, God gave to Jeremiah the four most glorious chapters of his prophecy and we know the prophecies of restoration that go from Jeremiah 30 to 33. B&S, we need to understand this, that that's not the right order of these chapters. You see, chapter 32 dates the beginning of the prophecy and the correct order of these 4 chapters is 32, 33, 30 and 31 and you'll find an incredible difference if you read them in that order. Now we know that's the order because, we have chapter 32 then chapter 33 says, 'The word of Yahweh came the **second time**'; the end of the prophecy is actually the end of chapter 31. So the correct order is 32, 33, 30 and 31 and it makes far more sense to read them in that order.

You see, the theme is, in:

chapter 32, Israel will come back from the captivity in Babylon.

chapter 33 is God will restore the temple.

chapter 30 is God will call all Israel from all over the world in the latter days.

chapter 31 is God will give them a heart of flesh to know Me.

God will convert the Jews in the latter days!

That's what Jeremiah is being told, here's how God inspired him, to endure the things that were going to happen to Jerusalem. He gave him a vision of the future glory of Israel, but there was something personal for Jeremiah right in the middle of it. Now I want you to come to chapter 32, and we're going to look very briefly at the story of the buying of Hanameel's field. Remember we said that God would obliterate the city of Anathoth? There was no one left except Uncle Hanameel who was living in Jerusalem and Jeremiah. Hanameel decided that because the Babylonians had come down through the Land and besieged Jerusalem, and because they were camped on Anathoth, that there was no point going on owning a block of land that the Babylonians already had. So he sells it to Jeremiah; now God had foreseen the selling of this block of land. Look at verse 7, 'Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it'. There was nobody else left to buy it but Jeremiah. So he's going to sell it to Jeremiah. God says, you buy it! Would you buy a bit of real estate on which the Babylonian army is sitting? Crazy! In this sense, and in this world, absolutely stupid to buy it! You couldn't believe that anyone would buy it; but God said, you buy it! So Hanameel comes as predicted and Jeremiah buys the field for 17 shekels of silver; now if you have a pencil or pen there I want you to colour in some key words that absolutely jump off the page. I'll just read a few verses for you and just emphasize the words: verse 10, 'I subscribed the **evidence**, and sealed it, and took **witnesses**'. Verse 11, 'I took the **evidence** of the purchase'; verse 12, 'I gave the **evidence**', on the turning of the page, 'in the presence of the **witnesses**; in verse 14, 'take the **evidence, this evidence** of the purchase, which is sealed; and the **evidence** which is open and put them in an earthen vessel'. You see, normally there were 2 documents of sale, there was one for the public record that went off to the records of the city, to say who owned blocks of land; and you got a title deed (we do the same thing today, the Land's office holds a copy of the title, and you get a copy of the title, so there was that which was sealed and that which was open). But God said, 'put both documents in an earthenware pot'.

Verse 16, 'I delivered the **evidence** to Baruch'. Verse 44, 'Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe **evidences**, and seal them, and take **witnesses**', and when you colour that in you find you've got the word 'evidence' 8 times, and 'witnesses' 4 times through this chapter and that's the **key** ..... was that block of land any good to Jeremiah? He was going to go off and be dragged off to Egypt and die there; a block of land in this life would do him no good at all. So why the need to buy the block of land? If

you could say bible chapters that talk about evidence and witnesses? Hebrews 11, the great chapter of the faithful starts off like this, 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen'. The persuasion says brother Thomas, the title deeds, our faith is the title deeds to the future; and when Hebrews 11 finishes, he says, 'Seeing we're compassed about by so many **witnesses**', and all the people that have gone before are the witnesses to the transaction of our faith. Our faith is in the future, in an inheritance that God will give us in the kingdom, and the witness of those that have gone before and having evidence and witnesses we are assured of our reward in the future.

Do you know what they did with those documents? Look what it says in verse 16, 'I delivered them to Baruch the son of Neriah', but what he had to do with it is what we read in verse 14, Baruch had to take it in an earthen vessel and put it in the earth to continue many days. You know, God has proved to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls that documents can survive for 2500 years in earthenware vessels. There are two documents in one vessel that are buried somewhere in Jerusalem that only Baruch knew where it was; and he's dead! Those documents are still there!

B&S, I want to paint you a scene! You know, the bible says that those who are Abraham's seed will inherit the land **with faithful Abraham**; it says in Psalm 37 verse 29, 'the righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever'; it says in Ezekiel 47 that the Prince of the temple of the age to come, shall give land unto His sons, and it shall be theirs forever; we are promised, b&s, a little bit of Abraham's land with Israel, but we'll get our inheritance in that land. I believe, that God will give everyone of us a parcel of land; that if we have children they will grow up in that land, living amongst the children of Israel, as Ezekiel 47 says, 'being vinedressers and herdsmen for the children of Israel'. When we go up year to year, we're going to see our families living in our inheritance in the land of Israel. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell there forever; and you know where some of those people will inherit, Abraham will get Hebron. Isaac will get Beer-sheba, Jacob and Joseph will live together at Shechem, Joshua will get Timnath, Samson will get Zorah, David-Bethlehem, and you can go on associating certain people with their inheritance in the land. What will Jeremiah get? he will get, b&s, the most glorious piece of real estate, 3 miles north of the temple at Anathoth, because he bought it back in those days. There will be none of the men of Anathoth there to see it, and Jeremiah will live 3 miles away from where Christ lives in the temple. I believe, the day will come when after the earthquake that devastates the city of Jerusalem that we know today, that Jesus will take Jeremiah by the hand and say, 'Come with me, Jeremiah; just dig under that rubble! and perhaps Baruch helping him, they will dig into the ground and the ruins of Jerusalem and out will come an earthenware pot that the divine providence has kept safe for 2500 years; and in there will be two documents, both of them open now for all to see, Jeremiah owns Anathoth. B&S, the ways of God, 'you've seen the end of the Lord', says James, 'that He is of great mercy and great pity towards those that speak His word', and Jeremiah has been promised his glorious inheritance!

Then follows chapters 33, 30 and 31, just come to the end of chapter 31, come to the end of these glorious prophecies of restoration, and see the response of Jeremiah to what God has promised him. Verse 24 of chapter 31 and bear in mind that this is the end of the prophecy, 'And there shall dwell in Judah and all the cities thereof, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks'; and we're told that the sons of the stranger will look after the flocks. That could be our children, b&s, if Christ comes and our children are not baptized, they will dwell there in the land of Israel and have their own families and be herdsmen and vinedressers. 'For I have satiated the weary soul' (Jeremiah, I know what you've been through) 'I've replenished every sorrowful soul' (Jeremiah, I know what you've put up with for this 40 years). Look at Jeremiah's response in verse 26, 'Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me'; you know, Jeremiah had been given this glorious vision and he was greatly moved. You see, that's what vision does for us, b&s, in times of grief and times of sadness; we know that the night will soon be passed. Weeping may endure for a night, says the psalm, but joy cometh in the morning; and when we receive our reward, when we're there with Jeremiah and with Christ, when we see our hopes realized, the bitterness of the night will seem to be sweet! because of the joy that has come in the morning.

So, b&s, let us take the exhortation of Jeremiah, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a man who was despised and rejected, a man of shame, and yet a courageous servant of God, who was always conscious of his own heart and the need for that to be tried, and let us, b&s, whatever circumstances come upon us that we don't understand, whenever we think that we have the right to question God, and say 'why me?', let's remember Jeremiah, in the stocks of Pashur and in the dungeon thereafter; let us, b&s, thank God that He does try us and will bring us forth as gold!