**Survey Old Testament**

**Jeremiah 26 Jeremiah narrowly escapes death**

1. The historical background of the Temple Sermon (7:1–8:17) is given in this chapter. Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was commanded to bring his message of repentance, or disaster, to the people of Judah in front of the Temple. The message is summarized here in one sentence (4–6) and declared that the destruction of the Temple would be the price for national disobedience.
2. Arrested and falsely accused by the priests and false prophets, Jeremiah was acquitted by the testimony of Ahikam and some of the wise court officials (citing the revival under Hezekiah that came as a result of the people’s repentance after the preaching of the prophet Micah). Determined to stop the divine message of judgment, Jehoiakim vented his anger against the prophet Urijah. Having fled to Egypt for protection, Urijah was apprehended, returned to Jehoiakim, and executed.

**Jeremiah 27-28 The sign of the yokes.**

1. Although Zedekiah had been placed upon the Judaean throne by Nebuchadnezzar, he, along with the neighboring kings, was planning a rebellion. Jeremiah’s message from the Lord was that this rebellion would be futile. By putting the yokes about Jeremiah’s neck, God graphically demonstrated the unbreakable bond of the Babylonian captivity.
2. Jeremiah 27:9–28:5 In addition to the false priests and false prophets, the national crisis had given birth to various soothsayers and religious quacks. The false message of peace was accepted by the people. Here, Jeremiah declares his message to Zedekiah. If Zedekiah would only submit to Babylon, Jerusalem could be spared.
3. Jeremiah 28:1–5. Shortly after the events of chapter 27, during that same year, one of the false prophets, Hananiah prophesied that in two years God would break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar and would return the stolen vessels, King Jehoiachin, and the other captives. Hananiah broke the yoke about Jeremiah’s neck as a sign of his prophecy.
4. Jeremiah received a word from the Lord, it was much stricter than before. The yoke of wood would become a yoke of iron. Since Hananiah had taught rebellion against the Lord, he would die. And so it happened. Hananiah’s prophecy did not come true, and his rapid death was a demonstration of God’s judgment.

**Jeremiah 29 Jeremiah’s first letter to the exiles.**

1. God’s word to the exiles was to prepare for a long stay in Babylon. They were to build houses and settle down. They were also to plant gardens to sustain them during the period. The people were exhorted to marry and have sons and daughters. Those prophets who were predicting a soon return to Judah were prophesying lies. They were not sent by God.
2. The restoration of the exiles to Judah would happen only when God’s 70 years of judgment were completed (25:11–12). Then God would fulfill His gracious promise to restore the exiles to their land.
3. Jeremiah 29:10–14 (NLT): This is what the Lord says: “You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12 In those days when you pray, I will listen. 13 If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. 14 I will be found by you,” says the Lord. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.”
4. The 70-year Exile was a part of God’s plans to give Judah hope and a future. The judgment prompted the exiles to seek God wholeheartedly. Once they had turned back to their God He would gather them from all the nations where they had been banished and return them to their land. The larger purpose of the Exile was to bring Israel back to her God and stop them from serving idols (Deut. 30:1–10).
5. Jeremiah 29:20–23 God vowed to judge these false prophets by handing them over to Nebuchadnezzar. He would put them to death before the very eyes of the exiles, to serve as an object lesson. They were executed by being burned in the fire, a form of punishment often used in Babylon (Dan. 3:6, 11, 15, 17, 19–23).

**Jeremiah 29:24–29 Jeremiah’s second letter to the exiles.**

1. Evidently after Jeremiah’s first letter to the exiles (1–23) another prophet in Babylon, Shemaiah, wrote the leaders in Jerusalem urging them to punish Jeremiah (25–28). However, the letter was read to Jeremiah (29) who then wrote a second letter to the exiles. He quoted the text of Shemaiah’s letter (24–28) and delivered God’s word of judgment against the false prophet (29–32).
2. Jeremiah 29:30–32 God would punish both Shemaiah and his descendants. Neither he nor his family would live to see the good things God promised to do for His people.

**Jeremiah 30 The nation’s physical deliverance**

1. God told Jeremiah to write His promises of comfort in a book so they would be available to the exiles after Jerusalem fell. This book would declare a note of hope that the days are coming, when God will restore His people. Jeremiah’s use of “the days” was significant because it described two different periods of time. The first “day” to which Jeremiah pointed was the day of destruction when God would judge Judah for her sin (5:18; 7:32; 9:25; 19:6). This day was fulfilled when Judah fell to Babylon. However, the second “day” to which Jeremiah pointed was a day of restoration when God will bring the nations of Judah and Israel into a new relationship with Him.
2. God’s restoration will involve a physical rebuilding. The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, including the king’s palace. The festive sound of rejoicing that had been silenced by Babylon (Jer. 7:34; 16:19; 25:10) will once again be heard in the city. The nation will be secured and established before God, and He will punish anyone who tries to oppress her.

**Jeremiah 31 The restoration of Israel.**

1. God assured the Northern Kingdom that He will restore her. Those who had survived the sword (probably Assyria’s destruction of Israel) will yet experience God’s favor. The turmoil of their long years of exile will cease when God intervenes to give rest to the nation Israel.
2. The motivation for God’s future restoration of the nation is His unfailing love which He will freely bestow on His People (Hosea 11:4; 14:4; Zeph. 3:17) and His loving-kindness (ḥeseḏ; Jer. 9:24; 32:18; Lam. 3:32; Dan. 9:4). God had made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:7–21) and another covenant with the nation Israel (Ex. 19:3–8; Lev. 26; Deut. 28:1–30:10), and He vowed to stay faithful to His commitments. Israel could look forward to experiencing God’s blessing.
3. Jeremiah drew three word-pictures that will characterize God’s restoration of Israel. First, it will be a time of renewed joy. Israel will once again take up her tambourines and dance with the joyful. The times of sadness will cease when the Captivity ends. Second, it will be a time of peace and prosperity as the people plant their vineyards on the hills of Samaria. Free from external threats, they will be able to enjoy their fruit (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:33; Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:9–10). Third, it will be a time of renewed commitment to the Lord.

**Jeremiah 32 Jeremiah’s faith in the restoration**

1. Jeremiah recorded the time frame in which this prophecy was given because of its significance to the message. The time was the 10th year of Zedekiah which was also the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus this prophecy occurred sometime between April 23 and October 17, 587 b.c. During this time Babylon was besieging Jerusalem a siege that lasted from January 15, 588 till July 18, 586 and Jeremiah was under arrest and confined in the palace courtyard of the guard.
2. In this grim time God came to tell Jeremiah of an impending visit. Jeremiah’s cousin, Hanamel, would visit Jeremiah in prison and ask him to buy his field at Anathoth. Hanamel was following the Mosaic Law which called for a person to redeem (purchase) the property of a relative who was forced to sell so that it would not leave the family (Lev. 25:25–28; Ruth 4:1–6).
3. The village of Anathoth was already under Babylonian control so this purchase would appear to be foolish. God told Jeremiah in advance that Hanamel would come so Jeremiah would recognize God’s hand in the request.
4. Jeremiah had the documents of the land he bought put in a clay jar for preservation. The documents had to last a long time because it would be many years before the people would be able to return from captivity and claim their land. Yet Jeremiah’s purpose in buying the land and preserving the deeds was to show that houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought by the people of Israel in the land.
5. Jeremiah began his prayer by focusing on the incomparable greatness and majesty of God’s character. God’s Creation of the heavens and the earth proves that nothing is too hard for Him (v. 27). He is omnipotent, and He is also a God of love and justice. He shows love (ḥeseḏ; 9:24; 31:3) to many, but He also punishes sin (Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9–10).
6. After reminding God of His mighty character and deeds, Jeremiah expressed his continued perplexity at God’s workings. Probably Jeremiah was expressing in verses 24–25 his bewilderment over how God would accomplish this restoration rather than doubting if God would accomplish it.
7. Jerusalem would be handed over to the Babylonians. Everything that God had foretold through His prophets had happened. Yet as the army of Babylon stood poised to reduce Jerusalem to rubble, God had commanded Jeremiah to buy a field that was already under Babylon’s control (32:6–12). Jeremiah did not understand how God’s promised restoration related to Judah’s present calamity.
8. God answered Jeremiah by first reminding him of His character. As Jeremiah had said, nothing is too hard for God ( v. 17). Jeremiah could depend on God’s Word even if he did not understand how it would be accomplished. Nebuchadnezzar would indeed destroy Jerusalem. He would set it on fire and burn it down (21:10; 34:2, 22; 37:8, 10; 38:18, 23) because of the people’s idolatry (19:13).

**Jeremiah 33 The restoration of Israel and Judah reaffirmed.**

1. This chapter is structurally and chronologically related to chapter 32. Jeremiah 33:1–13 continued God’s promise of blessing as He reaffirmed both the coming destruction and the future restoration of Jerusalem. God then reaffirmed His covenants with David and with the Levitical priests (vv. 14–26).

**Jeremiah 34 A Warning for Zedekiah**

1. In this chapter we have two messages which God sent by Jeremiah. (1) The fate of Zedekiah king of Judah, that he should fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, that he should live a captive, but would at last die in peace in his captivity. (2) Another to read the doom both of prince and people for their treacherous dealings with God, in bringing back into bondage their servants whom they had released according to the law.

**Jeremiah 35 The loyalty of the Rechabites.**

1. Written during the reign of Jehoiakim (probably during an early siege of Jerusalem), chapter 35 reveals the glaring sin of disobedience described in the previous chapter. Jeremiah was sent by God to test the loyalty of the Rechabites, a branch of the Kenites. (Num 10:29–32; Jud 1:16; 2 Kgs 10:15–23; 1 Chr 2:55). During the reign of Jehu (841–814 b.c.) the Rechabites assisted in the eradication of Baal from Israel (2 Kgs 10:15–23). They avoided the corrupting influences of the city life, living in tents and drinking no wine. Wine drinking was excessive in the ancient Near East and formed a vital part of Canaanite worship.
2. Since the armies of Nebuchadnezzar were ravaging the countryside, the Rechabites took refuge in Jerusalem. God, knowing the outcome of the test, had Jeremiah offer them wine to drink. When they refused on the basis of obedience to their father, God used this as an object lesson to Judah of their disobedience to Him. Judah would reap judgment for their disobedience (vs. 14), while the Rechabites would have an eternal relationship with God for their obedience.

**Jeremiah 36 King Jehoiakim Burns the Scroll**

1. We have here the first actual recording of Jeremiah’s prophecy. In the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim God commanded His prophet to write down his words. Jeremiah dictated these words to Baruch, his faithful friend and secretary, who wrote them upon a scroll. Once completed, Baruch read the scroll to the people at the Temple, then to the princes, who advised Baruch and Jeremiah to hide while they read the scroll to the king. Jehoiakim violently reacted to the prophecy and destroyed the scroll. Jeremiah was then instructed to compile a new scroll with several additional words.