

Calamities and Consolation

"Those times of change, so fraught with peril to the Israelitish nation, were marked with many messages from Heaven through Jeremiah. Thus the Lord gave the children of Judah ample opportunity of freeing themselves from entangling alliances with Egypt, and of avoiding controversy with the rulers of Babylon." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 423.

SUNDAY

THE PROPHET'S INNER CONFLICT

1. How did Jeremiah describe his emotional conflict and anguish in the face of the persecution and rejection that he met as God's prophet?

JEREMIAH 15:15-18 O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. ¹⁶Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. ¹⁷I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation. ¹⁸Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?

"Naturally of a timid and shrinking disposition, Jeremiah longed for the peace and quiet of a life of retirement, where he need not witness the continued impenitence of his beloved nation. His heart was wrung with anguish over the ruin wrought by sin." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 419.

MONDAY

2. What cruel treatment did he receive from a priest named Pashur? Nevertheless, what message did the prophet proclaim?

JEREMIAH 20:1-6 Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. ²Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. ³And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib. ⁴For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their 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. ⁵Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all

the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. ⁶And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

"But the faithful prophet was daily strengthened to endure. 'The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One,' he declared in faith; 'therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.' 'Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for He hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.' Jeremiah 20:11, 13." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 420.

TUESDAY

3. How did his experience compare to the assurance in Scripture about those who trust in the Lord? What lesson can we learn from this comparison about the importance of trusting God in times of trial?

JEREMIAH 17:7, 8 *Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. ⁸For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

"The experiences through which Jeremiah passed in the days of his youth and also in the later years of his ministry, taught him the lesson that 'the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' He learned to pray, 'O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.' Jeremiah 10:23, 24." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 420.

WEDNESDAY

EXHORTATION ABOUT THE SABBATH

4. What exhortation did God give through Jeremiah concerning Sabbath observance?

JEREMIAH 17:19-21 *Thus said the Lord unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; ²⁰And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: ²¹Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem.*

"The inhabitants of Jerusalem were in danger of losing sight of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and they were solemnly warned against following their secular pursuits on that day." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 411.

THURSDAY

5. Of what were God's people assured if they would honor His commandment by keeping the Sabbath day holy?

JEREMIAH 17:22-25 *Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. ²³But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. ²⁴And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; ²⁵Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever.*

"A blessing was promised on condition of obedience." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 411.

"On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 355.

FRIDAY

6. What would happen if they did not obey the Sabbath commandment?

JEREMIAH 17:27 *But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.*

"If the admonitions to obey the Lord God of their fathers and to hallow His Sabbath day were not heeded, the city and its palaces would be utterly destroyed by fire." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 411.

"Before the Sabbath begins, the mind as well as the body should be withdrawn from worldly business. God has set His Sabbath at the end of the six working days, that men may stop and consider what they have gained during the week in preparation for the pure kingdom which admits no transgressor. We should each Sabbath reckon with our souls to see whether the week that has ended has brought spiritual gain or loss.

"It means eternal salvation to keep the Sabbath holy unto the Lord. God says: 'Them that honor Me I will honor.' 1 Samuel 2:30." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 356.

SABBATH

PICTURE OF RUIN

7. How did Jeremiah use the illustration of the potter and the broken vessel to describe the ruin and destruction that would come upon Judah because they turned their backs on God?

JEREMIAH 18:1-6; 19:1-3, 10, 11 *The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, ²Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. ³Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. ⁴And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. ⁵Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ⁶O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.... ^{19:1}Thus saith the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; ²And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, ³And say, Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.... ¹⁰Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, ¹¹And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break these 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.*

"To illustrate further the nature of the swift-coming judgments, the prophet was bidden to 'take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom,' and there, after reviewing the apostasy of Judah, he was to dash to pieces 'a potter's earthen bottle,' and declare in behalf of Jehovah, whose servant he was, 'Even so will I break these people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again.'" —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 431.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"But the faithful prophet was daily strengthened to endure. 'The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One,' he declared in faith; 'therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.' 'Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for He hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.' Jeremiah 20:11, 13." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 420.