

Psalm 143, Jeremiah 1-7 (#110) Revised 2024

Psalm 143 — David prays for mercy, forgiveness, and deliverance from his enemies. *What is the basis for David's request?*

Jeremiah — Jeremiah's ministry lasted from 627 until 586 B.C., when he was forcibly taken to Egypt by a group who were afraid of Babylonian reprisals. God called Jeremiah as a young man to be a prophet of doom because of the continued evil of Judah. There was a revival under the leadership of King Josiah, but from the moment of his death (609 B.C.), the real hearts of the leaders and people were exposed. God called Jeremiah to confront them about their sin and His forthcoming judgment and urged them to repent and return to Yahweh. The role of a prophet was very difficult for Jeremiah since the people didn't want to hear the truth. He did not declare God's judgment with a hard heart but with such a tender heart that he was called the "weeping prophet." Even though he suffered beatings, imprisonment, great persecution, and was left to die in a cistern full of mud, God promised to be with him and protect him. Although the world would say that Jeremiah's life was a failure, in reality it was a great success because for forty years he was obedient and faithful to God's calling regardless of the opposition or personal cost. #3 p. 1195

Jeremiah 1 — At the very beginning of his calling by God, Jeremiah declares his inadequacy and inability to serve as a prophet to the nations. God assures this reluctant prophet that he needs not be afraid of anyone, but promises to be with him and deliver him. The Lord then made a powerful statement to Jeremiah in verse ten, saying He will fill his mouth with His words and has appointed him over nations and kingdoms to uproot, to tear down, to build, and to plant (vv. 9-10). He then saw two visions from God; (1) a branch of an almond tree, and (2) a boiling pot tilting away from the north (vv. 11-16). The Lord promises judgment for their evil and idolatry. God tells Jeremiah to say everything He commands and not to be intimidated by them. Although they will fight against Jeremiah, they will never prevail, and God will be with him and rescue him (vv. 17-19). *Explain the meaning of the two visions in verses 11-16.*

Jeremiah 2 — Chapter two begins Jeremiah's heart wrenching indictment against the apostasy of Judah. The Lord remembers back to Israel's loyalty and love as a young bride of Yahweh when she was holy to the Lord. He protected Israel from anyone who would try to hurt her by sending disaster upon them. However, even though He brought them to a lush and fertile land, they defiled the land through idolatry. The priests, rulers, and prophets all followed useless idols that caused the Lord to bring charges against them (vv. 1-9). Here is a conundrum. All the nations who follow worthless idols are still loyal to them, but Israel, who had the true God deserted Him for useless idols. They have done a double evil as they

have abandoned Yahweh, the fountain of living water, and have dug cisterns for themselves that hold no water. Because of this stupidity, Israel has been beaten up, trashed, and deserted by all her neighbors. Why has this happened? Israel had abandoned the Lord and did not fear Him (vv. 10-19). Judah declared that she didn't want the restraints of the Lord and prostituted herself before every pagan shrine. In times of disaster Judah came crawling back to Yahweh pleading to be saved, but God tells them to go to the gods they were worshipping and ask them to come to their aid (vv. 20-28). Israel killed her prophets and shed the blood of the innocent poor and yet says, "I am not guilty and surely His anger will turn away from me." But it is a sure thing that Yahweh will judge her. In looking to Egypt and Assyria for help instead of repenting and turning to the Lord, Judah would be put to shame. The people of Judah would be taken into captivity to Babylon with their hands on their heads as prisoners of war (vv. 29-37). *"We must guard against taking God's love and grace for granted and bowing down to modern-day idols in our own cultural environment. What are some of the specific idols that often replace God—even among professing Christians?" #14 p. 988*

Jeremiah 3 — The law says that when a man divorces his wife and marries another, he can never return to the first wife. Israel expects God to take her back. Israel and Judah have become spiritual prostitutes and exceedingly wicked, but now they were trying to make amends to Yahweh hoping He will not hold a grudge forever (vv. 1-5). Judah saw what the Lord did to Israel because of her harlotries when He gave her a certificate of divorce and sent her into captivity to Assyria. Yet Judah still did not really return to the Lord but only in pretense, not with her whole heart. So what is the Lord asking? He is asking unfaithful Israel and treacherous Judah to return in genuine repentance to God and acknowledge her guilt (vv. 6-13). Yahweh promises in the future to give them shepherds loyal to Himself. Israel and Judah will become one and will cease to follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. Jerusalem will be called the throne of the Lord and all nations will gather to it (vv. 14-18). So Yahweh pleads to faithless Israel and Judah to return to their father, and sometime in the future they will genuinely repent of their great sins and will beg for mercy and grace (vv. 19-25). *There was a revival in Judah under the leadership of Josiah, but in 609 B.C., he died in a battle with Pharaoh Neco of Egypt. What was the real reason that the country reverted back to do the evil done under Manasseh immediately after the death of godly King Josiah?*

Jeremiah 4 — The Lord calls for a show of genuine repentance by removing the detestable idols and for them not to waver in this decision. Their hearts are like hard ground that must be plowed up. If they do not repent, God's wrath will start a fire that no one can extinguish (vv. 1-4). Yahweh will bring disaster from the north (Babylon) with the ferocity of a lion, the force of a whirlwind, and the swiftness of an eagle. On that day of ruin and destruction the king and officials will lose their courage and the false prophets will be scared speechless because they prophesied peace when the sword was at their throats (vv. 5-18). Jeremiah writhes in anguish and agony because of the devastation that will come upon the land and the people. All of this destruction has happened since the people of Judah are experts at evil and incapable of doing good. As a consequence, God's blazing anger will be unleashed (vv. 19-26). Yahweh has determined that judgment by Babylon is fixed and sure, and no amount of maneuvering on Judah's part will stop the horsemen, the archers, or the massacre of the people of Zion (vv. 27-31). *In verses 3-4, give two analogies of true repentance, breaking up unplowed ground and circumcision. Please explain what the author meant by these two analogies.*

Jeremiah 5 — Jeremiah could not even find one person who was just and faithful to the Lord in Jerusalem. Both the poor and the powerful had broken God's yoke and torn off His chains. They will suffer the consequences for their rebellious acts. Their invaders are ready to strike them like a lion, ravage them like a wolf, and tear them to pieces like a leopard. Should God not punish them for their idolatry and immorality (vv. 1-9)? Judah, the vineyard of the Lord, will be crushed because of her sin, and like the trees in a forest fire, she will be fully consumed. The ancient nation from the north will totally consume everything, including harvests, sons and daughters, animals, vines, fig trees, and fortified cities (vv.10-17). In grace, God says He will not completely destroy Judah, but because they served foreign gods, they will now serve foreigners in a foreign land. The people of Judah do not fear the Lord or tremble before Him, but are stubborn and rebellious. Wicked men have grown powerful and rich through deceit and evil, and have forgotten the fatherless and the rights of the needy. The prophets tell lies and the priests rule on their own without God. When the end comes, the people of Judah will be speechless (vv. 18-31). *"As history continues to unfold, we should expect that human beings generally will increasingly choose sinful behavior rather than righteousness. How should the progressive depravity in our culture impact our lives as Christians?" #14 p. 995-996.*

Jeremiah 6 — Coming from the north, the leaders of the army are ready to surround Jerusalem like shepherds, raise a siege ramp in order to destroy Zion and bring her to desolation for her evil and violence (vv. 1-9). Although God has sent His Word to them, they neither want to hear it or find pleasure in it. The Lord's wrath is coming on all the inhabitants of the land since everyone deals falsely. They cry, "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace (vv. 10-15). Judah has completely rejected the testimony of the law and God's ways (ancient paths), but still perform the ritual sacrifices which have become completely meaningless (vv. 16-21). The warning has been sounded because a cruel nation from the north is on its way to Zion to attack and destroy her. Distress will seize the people who should be dressing in sackcloth to mourn the indescribable suffering and slaughter that is coming. Jeremiah was hoping that the fire of his message would remove impurities like a refiner's fire, but there is no purity in them at all and so they must be called rejected silver (slag) (vv. 22-30). *What were the reasons listed in this chapter that shows that God's judgment on Judah was just? See verses 10, 13-15, 16, and 20.*

Jeremiah 7 — The Lord commands Jeremiah to stand in the city gate and warn the people to correct their ways and repent of their evil deeds if they want to continue to live in the land. Their false theology said that because the Lord had chosen to dwell in the temple, He is obligated to protect and bless all who live in Judah irrespective of the type of life they live or the things they do. The changes that must be made are to act justly toward each other and no longer oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow. They must stop the bloodshed of the innocent, stealing, immorality, burning incense to Baal and other gods. If they question whether the temple could be destroyed by God, they should remember what happened to Shiloh, which was a former dwelling place of the Lord. Shiloh was not spared destruction because of Israel's great wickedness (vv. 1-15). God wanted Jeremiah to stop praying for Judah since God will not answer him due to their sins. Since they worship and sacrifice to the Queen of Heaven, God's wrath will burn and not be quenched (vv. 16-20). When the Lord of Heaven's armies brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the thing He was most concerned about was not their sacrifices but their obedience to His commands. They did not listen but followed their own stubborn desires and became more obstinate than their ancestors (vv. 21-26). Because of all of the detestable things that have defiled the Lord's house and the city of Jerusalem, Topheth, where children have been burned as offerings, and the Valley of Hinnom will be called the Valley of Slaughter. There will be no more joy and gladness since the land will become desolate waste (vv. 27-34). *If God called Jeremiah to be a prophet to our culture today, what things of his time would be similar to our culture, and what might be different? #6, p. 319.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 144, Jeremiah 8-13 (#111) Revised 2024

Psalm 144 — David thanks God for preparation, protection in battle, and the prosperity of God's people. *Are you ready to do battle in the arena where God has called you? Explain.*

Jeremiah 8 — The invaders will not only slaughter nearly everyone but will take the bones out of the tombs of the kings, officials, priests, prophets, and residents of Jerusalem and leave them exposed to the heavenly bodies they once worshiped. Why are the people of Jerusalem void of understanding and so prone to stay on the path of deceit and evil without a tinge of conscience when God's created birds follow the pattern set out for them (vv. 1-7)? The people claim to be wise since they have the law, but they actually have rejected the Word of the Lord and will have their wives and fields taken by other men. Everyone in Zion is making a profit dishonestly and deals falsely with his neighbor. They are not ashamed of their actions or feel humiliation any longer (vv. 8-13). As the snorting of the warhorses are heard from Dan coming down from the north, the people begin to recognize that all of the talk of peace was sheer nonsense and that the armies from the north will be like poisonous vipers let loose on the city of Jerusalem (vv. 14-17). Jeremiah's heart is broken for his people, and he mourns in horror for the future overthrow and slaughter that will soon come. He sighs and laments, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved (vv. 18-22)." *Verses 18 to 22 vividly portray Jeremiah's grief over the sins of his people for rejecting God and His laws. Should we have this same burden for our lost family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and world? We need to ask God to break our hearts for what breaks His heart and be burdened for the lost souls that Christ loves and died for.*

Jeremiah 9 — Jeremiah's lament continues as he weeps and sobs over his dear people, but he recognizes that their transgressions and immorality is only growing worse, and therefore God in His justice must judge. Not only is their relationship with God broken and ruled by deception, but also their relationships with each other are marked by deceit, slander, betrayal, and falsehood (vv. 1-8). The future destruction of Judah is a foregone conclusion, all of the animals will go away, and Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble (vv. 9-11). "The wise person will understand that Judah will be driven from My land and scattered throughout the nations because they have abandoned My instruction and voice, and have worshipped Baal," says Yahweh (vv. 12-16). Bring out the professional women who mourn to raise a

lament for the carnage that will happen to Judah and other nations who have uncircumcised hearts (vv. 17-26). *What are three things we are never to boast in? What should we boast about? See verses 23-24.*

Jeremiah 10 — The people of Judah were trying to act like the nations around them by worshiping man-made idols that are as worthless as scarecrows in a cucumber patch which cannot do any harm or any good. There is no comparison between the majesty, grandeur, eternity, and omnipotence of Yahweh and the impotent, lifeless, and worthless idols that are fashioned by skilled artisans. The living Lord of Angel Armies, who created the world and the heavens by His wisdom and power, also controls and sustains the earth and its ecosystem. This great God does not resemble in any way the carved images, but actually belongs to the descendants of Jacob who are His special inheritance (vv. 1-16). The Lord warns the people to pack their bags and be prepared for His judgment. Jeremiah grieves over the soon invasion from the north when the homes and families will be destroyed and left desolate because the shepherds (leaders) had no desire to seek the Lord. Jeremiah pleads that the Lord would discipline His people with justice but not in anger, which might totally annihilate them. He asks God to take vengeance on the nations that refuse to acknowledge Yahweh and who mistreat His people (vv. 17-25). *How did Jeremiah and Paul respond to those who rejected their message and attacked them? Jeremiah 8:18, 10:19, 24, 13:17, 14:17 and Romans 9:1-3. How is this an example to us?*

Jeremiah 11 — Judah was to listen to the words of the covenant that God made with Israel under Moses, and obey all of the commands He gave them so they would not be under the curse and lose their homeland. Judah, however, did not obey the words of the covenant, but worshipped other gods who would not respond to their cries. Jeremiah was warned by God not to raise up a cry or a prayer on their behalf because He will not be listening or answering them. He has decreed disaster on Judah because of their worship of Baal (vv. 1-17). The people of Anathoth, Jeremiah's hometown, plotted to kill him if he didn't stop prophesying disaster in the name of Yahweh. Not only did the Lord protect him, but he also said that in the time of God's judgment, every single person including their families who plotted his death would not survive (vv. 18-23). *God told Jeremiah not to pray for Judah because judgment was inevitable (v. 14). Using the verses listed, what attitudes or actions can keep our prayers from being answered by God? Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 59:2, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 29:13, James 4:3, James 1:6, and I Peter 3:7.*

Jeremiah 12 — Jeremiah is troubled with the prosperity of the wicked, wondering why they are not punished more quickly so that their wickedness can be brought out into the open, and the land can be released from the curse. God warned Jeremiah that he must toughen up and prepare himself for much more difficult times ahead when even his own siblings will be treacherous with him (vv. 1-6). The Lord has had to abandon the love of His life (Israel) to her enemies and to vicious wild animals because of her pride and wickedness. Then Yahweh addresses the neighboring nations who attacked Judah, saying that they also will be uprooted from their land. If they learn His ways and call on His name, then they will return to their own land. If, however, they don't seek Him, it will mean total annihilation for them. *Can we complain to God when we have negative thoughts and feelings about circumstances God has allowed which we think are unfair? See Jeremiah 12:1, Psalm 13:1-2, and Psalm 73.*

Jeremiah 13 — The Lord gave two living illustrations to Jeremiah to make clear to the people why He must send judgment upon them. The people of Judah were like a linen belt or undergarment of Jeremiah that was buried in a rocky crevice by the Euphrates River that became worthless. As this loincloth clings to a man's waist, God created Judah to cling to Him so that they might bring fame and glory to His name, but they would not obey. A second object lesson was that of jars (wineskins) full of wine. God will fill all the people of Judah with wine or drunkenness so that they would suffer from the staggering effects of His complete destruction (vv. 1-14). The prophet is asking Judah to stop their pride and give glory to God while it is still light. Soon it will become dark, and they will be taken captive. The king and queen mother have lost their crowns and the flock entrusted to them, and every one of them has been taken into exile (vv. 15-20). God's awful judgment is coming on Judah because they put their trust in false gods and have committed detestable acts of spiritual adultery. Men can't change the color of their skin, leopard's spots cannot be removed, and the house of Judah is unable to do good since it has always been accustomed to practicing evil (vv. 15-27). *What were the three signs of pride in this chapter? See verse 10. How are these three signs of pride reflected in the lives of many Christians?*

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Psalm 145, Jeremiah 14-19 (#112) Revised 2024

Psalm 145 — This is an acrostic psalm that celebrates God's sovereignty, unfailing love, and intimate attention to the needs of every living being in His creation. *Verse three says, "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, his greatness no one can fathom." From verses 4 to 20, explain from each verse how or why God is great.*

Jeremiah 14 — A severe drought sweeps across the land because of Judah's great guilt, rebellion, and sin. Then Jeremiah pleads and intercedes to Yahweh, the only Hope of Israel, not to abandon His people, but the Lord responds by highlighting their extreme wickedness. God commands Jeremiah not to pray for their well-being for they certainly will be consumed by sword, famine, or plague (vv. 1-12). Jeremiah said to the Lord that the false prophets are telling the people that they won't see death by sword or famine but will experience peace. God proclaimed that indeed these prophets who preach lies will themselves die by the sword and famine, and that the people's bodies will be thrown into the streets with no one to bury them (vv. 11-16). Once again Jeremiah mourns and weeps for the nation due to their great suffering and the terror that is befalling them. He acknowledged Judah's great wickedness but pleaded that for the sake of the Lord's reputation and glorious throne, He would remember His covenant and rescue His people (vv. 17-22). *Just as in Jeremiah's day, there are false prophets today in the Christian church. What are some safeguards we need to put into place in order to protect ourselves and our churches from error? #14, p. 1008.*

Jeremiah 15 — Jeremiah was earnestly interceding for his people, but the Lord said that He would not have compassion on Judah even if Moses and Samuel were interceding on their behalf. God destined the people to death, the sword, famine, or captivity because of the evil done by King Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, during his 55-year reign as king. Since they will not turn from their wicked ways, Yahweh will not have pity on them. He will cause wives to become widows and mothers to become childless (vv. 1-9). Although Jeremiah again complained about his calling from God to preach judgment, which brought on him the wrath and curses of everyone, God assures him of His care and protection from the enemy. Jeremiah utters his disappointment with God for the disgraceful way he has been treated by the people and accuses God of not protecting him. God tells Jeremiah that if he repents, He will restore him and make him like a fortified iron (bronze) wall. He promises His servant His presence and guarantees him

that he will be delivered from the power of the enemy (vv. 10-21). *Of what did Jeremiah have to repent? See verses 10 and 15-18. #7, p.1109.*

Jeremiah 16 — Jeremiah was forbidden by the Lord to marry and have children, to attend a funeral, or celebrate a feast. The people question why the Lord has declared this great disaster on them, and He said that it is because their fathers had abandoned Him and did not obey His instruction. Even more, they themselves have done more evil than their fathers by following the stubbornness of their wicked hearts and not by obeying Him (vv. 1-13). Yahweh promises that the day will come when He will bring them back to the land of their ancestors. The people of Judah acted like little children who think that because they can't see you, you can't see them. The Lord, however, will use fishermen to catch them and hunters to hunt them down, and they will be repaid double for the detestable and abhorrent idols that they have worshipped. Through their great suffering and the return of the faithful remnant to Jerusalem seventy years later, Judah and Israel will know the Lord's power and might (vv. 14-21). *What were the reasons that Jeremiah was forbidden to marry and have children, attend a funeral, or celebrate a feast? See verses 1-9.*

Jeremiah 17 — Because of the unrestrained idolatry of the people, they would forfeit their wealth, relinquish their inheritance, and serve their enemies in a land they did not know. The Lord then contrasts the man who puts his trust in human flesh and thus is cursed, with the man who trusts in Yahweh and finds prosperity even though living in times of drought and suffocating heat (vv. 1-8). The Lord examines the heart of man which is deceitful and incurable and will give to each according to what his actions deserve. The choice is clear. We can worship the eternal and glorious Lord, or we can abandon Him with eternal consequences (vv. 9-13). Jeremiah once again feels the sting of the people's taunting by their asking him, "If you are speaking the Word of the Lord, why hasn't God's judgment already come?" Jeremiah pleads with the Lord to vindicate, save him, and bring total destruction on his persecutors (vv. 14-18). The Lord asks the king, Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem to show their loyalty and obedience to Him by not doing normal work on the Sabbath, but to keep it holy and to offer sacrifices to Him. If they kept the Sabbath holy as commanded in Exodus 20:8-11, then Yahweh would accept them and allow them to continue in the land, but if not, then He would set the gates on fire and consume everything (vv. 19-27). *What does the Bible teach about the condition of the human heart and God's ability to examine it and transform it? See 17:9-10, 1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 15:18-20, and Jeremiah 24:7, 31:33. What should our response to Him be? Proverbs 4:23, Psalms 139:23-24, and Psalm 86:11.*

Jeremiah 18 — God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house and related the work of a potter as an illustration of God as the potter and Israel as the clay. The Lord declares His right to reshape Israel into any form He wishes. Whenever a judgment is announced by God, the ultimate result will be according to the response of that nation. If the nation repents, then God will relent concerning the disaster He was going to send. If Judah, or any nation, disregards God's announcement of judgment and does not repent, judgment is sure to follow. Since God's people have forgotten Him, rejected His ancient roads, and burn incense to false idols, God will turn His back on them in the day of calamity (vv. 1-17). The people plotted against Jeremiah declaring that they had enough priests and prophets to teach and guide them so they wouldn't need to pay any attention to what he is saying. Jeremiah implores for God's vindication and asks for protection from their plot to throw him into a pit (vv. 18-23). *This chapter depicts God as the Sovereign potter. What responsibility do you play as a clay pot being formed by God? See II Timothy 2:19-21.*

Jeremiah 19 — Jeremiah bought a clay jar and took some of the elders and priests to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, and there proclaimed God's judgment because of all the evil they had done in Judah by burning of incense to other gods and by burning of their children on the altar of Baal. Jeremiah then shattered the clay jar depicting what God would do to the city and its people and showing them that they could never again be mended. Then he returned from the Valley of (Ben) Hinnom, which he called the Valley of Slaughter, to the courtyard of the temple to proclaim disaster because of Judah's idolatry, obstinacy, and disobedience. *What was taking place at the Valley of (Ben) Hinnom, and what place mentioned in the New Testament was derived from it? See Matthew 5:22.*

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