

## Psalm 149-150, Jeremiah 42-49 (#116) Revised 2024

**Psalm 149** — This is a new song written to praise our God who never grows old. *What are different ways the Jews who returned to Jerusalem from exile praised the Lord? See verses 1 to 3.*

**Psalm 150** — The psalmist reminds us where, why, how, and whom should praise God. *Music is such a powerful way to praise the Lord! What is your favorite worship song or hymn? Why? What is your favorite genre of Christian music? What is your favorite musical instrument?*

**Jeremiah 42** — Fearful of the king of Babylon, Johanan and all the people that were left in Israel want to go to Egypt. Before leaving for Egypt, they approach Jeremiah asking him to seek the Lord's will on the matter. After ten days Jeremiah received direction from the Lord and summoned Johanan, the commanders of the armies, and all the people. Yahweh, through Jeremiah, said in no uncertain terms they must not go to Egypt but must stay in the land and the Lord will protect them and cause them to receive favor in the eyes of the King of Babylon. However, if they decide to go to Egypt, the Lord says, "know for a certainty you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to live (v. 22)." *What does Jeremiah promise the people, and what does Johanan and the people promise Jeremiah? See verses 4 to 6.*

**Jeremiah 43** — After hearing the words of Jeremiah, Azariah and Johanan call Jeremiah a liar whose words, they say, were actually motivated by Baruch who was inciting Jeremiah against them so that they will be handed over to the Chaldeans to be killed or to be deported to Babylon. In disobedience to God, Johanan and the commanders of the armies took all the people who remained in the land of Israel to the land of Egypt along with Jeremiah and Baruch (vv. 1-7). When they arrived in Tahpanhes by Pharaoh's palace, the Lord gives a warning through Jeremiah of the future judgment of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar and set large stones in mortar as a declaration of this future event (vv. 8-13). *What was the fatal mistake Johanan and the people made in chapters 42 and 43? #7 p. 1150 Do we ever do this?*

**Jeremiah 44** — The Lord through Jeremiah gives one final warning of judgment to the Jewish people in Egypt, not only because they disobeyed His command by going to Egypt, but also for continuing to worship and burn incense to idols. Because of this idolatry, they will be cut off without descendants and become an object of cursing and insult to the rest of the nations of the world (vv. 1-14). The people defiantly say they will not listen to the word of the Lord but will continue to offer incense to the queen of heaven because they had plenty food and good things in Judah when they were worshipping her. Jeremiah reminds them they have conveniently forgotten the conquest and destruction of land by the Babylonians due to their idolatry. He then repeats that surely they will die by sword or famine until they are finished off (vv. 15-30). *As you read this chapter, what did it say about the spiritual state of the people of Judah in the last days between the death of Josiah (609 B.C.) and the destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.)? What does it say about the spiritual leadership of the Jewish husbands in their homes at that time? See verse 19. How does this relate to us as men as leaders in our homes?*

**Jeremiah 45** — The time of the writing of this chapter goes back to about 605 B.C. when Jehoiakim was king in Judah. Baruch was the scribe who wrote down all the words that Jeremiah dictated to him. His brother Seraiah, occupied an important position for the king, but Baruch was not to be ambitious and make himself great. He was weary as Jeremiah had been at times and needed to understand that this was a time not to think of himself but to realize that disaster is coming for everyone. God's promise was that He would protect him and save his life through it all. *Should we as Christians be ambitious and seek great things for ourselves? Why or why not? Is being ambitious for God wrong? Why was Baruch told not to seek great things?*

**Jeremiah 46** — From chapters 46 to 51, God demonstrates His holiness and justice and judges other nations just as He judged Israel. In 605 B.C., Pharaoh Neco of Egypt is defeated by the army of Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish beside the Euphrates River, and now Babylon becomes the major power in the Near East. Verses 3 to 12 describe the pitiful battle plan of Egypt to gain preeminence over Babylon, but it was to no avail since the Lord of Hosts was avenging Himself against His adversaries (vv. 1-12). Now Jeremiah prophesies about the invasion of Babylon (called a horsefly) upon Egypt (called a

beautiful heifer) that happened in 568 B.C. which came in fulfillment of a warning to the idolatrous people of Judah who had fled the land of Israel to escape the fury of Babylon (chapter 44). Pharaoh and Amon (the chief god of Egypt) were no match for the army of Babylon who was energized by the Lord of Hosts Himself (vv. 13-25). God promises Israel that once His discipline on them is completed, He will bring them back to their own land, and they will find calm and rest (vv. 27-28). *After reading this chapter, what does it say about God, His character, and His plan for the world?*

**Jeremiah 47** — The date of the actual fulfillment of this prophecy against the Philistines was 604 B.C. when King Nebuchadnezzar came against the city of Achkelon and destroyed it. The army of Babylon was described as “waters that are rising from the north.” It is the Lord who is judging the Philistines for their wickedness. *What is the lesson taught in this chapter about God?*

**Jeremiah 48**— This chapter speaks of the defeat of Moab at the hands of the armies of Babylon in 582 B.C., just six years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Moabites were descendants of Lot, Abraham’s nephew, along with Ammon, Moab’s brother (Genesis 19:30-38). Moab opposed Israel coming through their land in Moses’ era. During David’s kingship Israel ruled over Moab. David’s great-grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabite and was in the line of Jesus the Messiah. The enemy would wreck devastation upon Moab and their god Chemosh, and all their inhabitants would be carried off to Babylon. Moab felt somewhat secure, but God’s judgment on their wickedness and pride was sure (v. 29). The Lord declares, “Make him drunk, because he has exalted himself against the Lord. Moab will wallow in his own vomit, and he will also become a laughingstock (vv. 26-27 HCSB).” However, the God of mercy says, “Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab in the last days (v. 47).” *Concerning Moab the Lord said, “We have heard of Moab’s pride—how great is her arrogance?—of her insolence, her pride, her conceit, and the haughtiness of her heart (v. 29 NIV). What is so evil about pride? What are some verses that help Christians guard themselves against pride?*

**Jeremiah 49** — The Lord (through Jeremiah) continues to judge the nations for their sins through the army of Nebuchadnezzar. This chapter speaks of the judgment on Ammon (vv. 1-6), Edom (vv. 7-22), Damascus (vv. 23-27), Kedar and Hazor (vv. 28-33), and Elam (vv. 34-39). The Ammonites were proud of her fruitful valley where three mountains protected her, but God's judgment came anyway. Again, in grace, God promised Ammon that the captives would return to their land (vv. 1-6). Edom was very proud of her wisdom and invincible location in the rocks. God promises that she will become a complete desolation like Sodom and Gomorrah and after her destruction no one will live there (vv. 7-22). Although at one time the nation of Aram, with its capital city Damascus, was the strongest power in the near east, they would be defeated and experience the hand of God's judgment through the Babylonians (vv.23-27). In 599 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar came against and defeated Kedar and Hazor, who were located in the Arabian Desert east of Israel (vv. 28-33). Elam was east of Babylon and was defeated by them in 597 B.C., but eventually became the nucleus of the Medo-Persia Empire with its capital in Susa (vv. 34-39). *List the sins of Ammon and Edom given in this passage, and give the names of the men from whom they descended.*

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.

## **Proverbs 1, Jeremiah 50-52, Lamentations 1-3 (#117) Revised 2024**

**Proverbs** — Written by Solomon in his early years as the king of Israel with the help of Agur (Chapter 30) and King Lemuel (Chapter 31), the book of Proverbs gives wise advice for people to live godly, prudent lives in their relationships with others and to live successful lives in the face of difficulties and challenges. The book of Proverbs covers a multitude of important subjects including fearing and knowing God, gaining wisdom, generosity, living a godly lifestyle, relationships with neighbors and family, warnings against adulterous women, diligence, justice, discretion, integrity, control of the tongue, instruction and discipline of children, humility, the sovereignty of God, alcohol, and many other practical topics. The writer uses various literary forms including couplets, poems, brief parables, and pointed questions. <sup>#7</sup> page 994. The purpose for this book is to help men and women live long satisfying lives without suffering the regrets and consequences that follow living lives of pride, selfishness, sloth, godlessness, and dissipation.

**Proverbs 1** — What principle is taught in verses 5-6 and 8? What great preacher in the New Testament had this quality? See Acts 18:24-26.

**Jeremiah 50** — Even before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Jeremiah prophesies the complete annihilation of Babylon which would happen in 539 B.C. The gods of Babylon, Bel and Marduk, would be devastated, but the God of Israel would return her people to the land of Canaan because they would seek Him. Jeremiah writes 110 verses to describe the Lord's vengeance on Babylon for the evil deeds it would do on Judah and the other nations and for acting arrogantly against Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel. The promise to Babylon is that this great city would never again be inhabited throughout all generations (v. 39). The Lord promises to Israel that when she is living in obedience, He will make with her an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten (v. 5), and He will forgive her guilt and sins (v. 20). *This chapter speaks of a time in the future when Israel and Judah would seek the Lord (v. 4), when "an everlasting covenant" is made with them (v. 5), and when their guilt and sin would be pardoned (v. 20). When did or when will these words be fulfilled? See Jeremiah 31:31-40 and Revelation 20:4.*

**Jeremiah 51** — Now that God fulfilled His purpose by using Babylon to discipline His wayward people, it is payback time when He would come in vengeance against Babylon for its violence, evil, and arrogance. This chapter says twice that Media would come against Babylon 58 years before it happened, showing

the Almighty's omniscience and sovereignty (vv. 11, 28). The Lord now vindicates Zion by preparing a destroyer who will devastate Babylon, causing her to reel like a drunkard and her governors, sages, and officials to fall asleep forever. Seraiah, the brother of Baruch, takes this scroll (chapters 50-51) to Babylon, reads it, ties a rock to it, and throws it into the Euphrates River as a witness against Babylon (vv. 59-64). *In verses 59 to 64 what were the four steps that Jeremiah commanded Seraiah? What did Seraiah do as quartermaster for King Zedekiah?*

**Jeremiah 52** — Although not the words of Jeremiah, this chapter is a fitting conclusion to the book since it vindicates all the prophecies that the Lord spoke through Jeremiah. Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.) is placed in power by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon but finally rebels against him (588 B.C.), thinking that Egypt would come to their rescue. After a siege for two years by Babylon (586 B.C.), the city of Jerusalem was broken into, and King Zedekiah and his warriors fled the city. The king was then captured and brought to Riblah to be sentenced by Nebuchadnezzar. After seeing his sons slaughtered, Zedekiah's eyes were put out, and he was carried off in chains to Babylon. The priests and officials of the king were also killed at Riblah by Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord's temple, the king's palace, the walls of the city, and all the houses in Jerusalem were destroyed by the Babylonians, and the poorest of the land were left to take care of the vines and the farm land. Meanwhile in Babylon about 560 B.C., King Jehoiachin of David's line was released from prison and dined regularly in the presence of King Evil-Merodach of Babylon for the rest of his life. *Jeremiah had a very rough life from the time of Josiah's death to his forced journey to Egypt after 586 B.C. Would you call Jeremiah's life successful? Why or why not?*

**Lamentations** — Soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Jeremiah writes this book lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians with the people of Judah being killed, tortured, and thousands taken captive to Babylon. Each of the first four chapters is written as an acrostic poem, with the first word of each verse beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (like Psalms 119 and 145). Jeremiah clearly states that because of the sins of the people this devastation has come, but also gives rays of hope for the future and acknowledges God's faithfulness and love.

**Lamentations 1** — The people of Jerusalem are in stunned disbelief that their most beloved city and the temple where Yahweh dwelt are completely destroyed. They were God’s chosen people, and this temple was Lord’s only dwelling place in all of the earth. So they thought it was impossible that God would allow this to happen, even though He had sent many prophets to warn of His terrible judgment on His people for their transgressions. Like a widow losing all her children, everything including material goods, family members, leaders, and homes are gone. This once bustling city full of song, joy, and sounds of commerce is now silent, and no one is there to help or give comfort. The wicked Chaldeans have done all manner of torture and atrocities against them, and their allies have turned against them and rejoiced in their demise. In anguish they cry, “Look at all their evil deeds, Lord. Punish them, as you have punished me for all my sins. My groans are many and I am sick at heart (v. 22 NLT).” *In what ways is the Lord warning your nation about its sinfulness? What can we do to help avert God’s judgment?*

**Lamentations 2** — The righteous anger of God was poured out on His people without compassion for their continual rebellion, stubbornness, and idolatry over many years. Jeremiah cries out, “My eyes are worn out from weeping; I am churning within. My heart is poured out in grief because of the destruction of my dear people (v. 11 HCSB).” The children died in the arms of their mothers, the young men and women have fallen by the sword, and no one has survived because the people would not repent at the hearing of God’s prophets but instead willfully and gladly accepted the empty and deceptive visions of the false prophets. What can be done? The prophet says, “Pour out your heart like water before the Lord’s presence. Lift up your hands to Him for the lives of your children (v. 19 HCSB).” *Why does God allow innocent children to suffer?* #7 p.1179

**Lamentations 3** — Although Jeremiah had preached God’s coming judgment on his people for forty years, when it finally did come, he grieved greatly under the weight of unbearable suffering and affliction that his people received from the rod of the Lord’s anger (vv. 1-21). Jeremiah expresses hope with the fact that God has not totally destroyed or abandoned His nation, and that He is merciful and faithful to those who truly repent, wait on Him, and seek Him. The Lord has disciplined His people for their sins but does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering, and will not reject them forever. Jeremiah says, “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord...We have transgressed and rebelled (vv. 40, 42 ESV).” Now the author asks for vengeance on their enemies who mercilessly abused and

destroyed them. “Pay them back what they deserve, O Lord, for what their hands have done (v. 64 NIV).” *Read verses 22 to 23 that ends with the famous words, “Great is Your faithfulness.” Recount in a paragraph the mercies and faithfulness of God in your life during the last month, the last year, and over your lifetime.*

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## Proverbs 2, Lamentations 4-5, Joel 1-3, Amos 1-2 (#118) Revised 2024

**Proverbs 2** — *This chapter says we are to seek wisdom like silver and then “you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God (vv. 4-5 HCSB).” What are the two dangers that wisdom saves us from? See verses 11-15 and verses 16-19.*

**Lamentations 4** — In this chapter there are contrasts between the condition of the people before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. The once precious people worth their weight in gold are now treated as clay pots that can be shattered to pieces. Those who lived in the city of Sodom were better off because they were destroyed in an instant and didn't have to suffer a famine or the atrocities of war. Why did all this befall God's chosen people? This happened due to the sins of the prophets who told lies, because of the priests who shed the blood of the righteous, and on account of the people's misguided trust in the protection of the king. In time God's punishment on Judah will be finished, and they will return from exile, but Edom's punishment will just be beginning. *How are the leaders of a nation accountable for the sins of the people?* #7 p.1185

**Lamentations 5** — Jeremiah represents all of the people as he asks Yahweh for mercy and to restore His people to a relationship with Himself. From verses 2 to 18, he lists a series of woes that the people have suffered at the hands of the Chaldeans due to Judah's sins. The people have become orphans, fatherless, or widows who lack the basic necessities of life while their women, princes, elders, and young men have endured horrible atrocities and feel completely abandoned by God. Jeremiah recognizes the enthroned Lord who endures from generation to generation. He pleads, “Restore us to Yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old (v. 21 NIV).” *What attribute of God is displayed in verse 19? Why is that significant?*

**Joel** — The name Joel means, “The Lord (Yahweh) is God.” It is believed by most scholars that Joel was written somewhere between 835 B.C. and 796 B.C., possibly during the reign of King Joash. The immediate setting of the book was a day of the Lord’s judgment when an invasion of locusts came and destroyed all of the crops. He calls the people to fasting and repentance because of their sin which has caused this plague. Joel goes from present day devastation to a future time when the fortunes of Israel will be restored and God will pour out His Spirit on all humanity. At the same time, the Lord will send judgment on the nations for their wickedness when He swings His sickle because the harvest is ripe (3:13). With all of the doom and gloom in the first half of the book, the second half speaks of God’s blessing and final restoration of Judah and Jerusalem with the promise of security, peace, and prosperity from generation to generation.

**Joel 1** — The prophet Joel speaks for the Lord and tells the people that the plague of locusts that has come is a sign of God’s judgment on the people of Judah for their sins. After the swarms of locusts had gone, not only were all of the vegetation, the leaves from the trees, and the crops destroyed, but even the bark of the trees was stripped off. Without figs, grapes, olives, dates, wheat, barley, and various fruit trees, there was no food for man or animals. Judah needs to proclaim a sacred fast, cry out to the Lord, and repent of their evil ways. *The people of Judah were told to “cry out to the Lord” in this time of devastation. Have you ever cried out to the Lord when you were in a time of great distress? If so, share the story with your group. See also Psalm 34:6 and Psalm 145:19.*

**Joel 2** — As a watchman on a wall, Joel was sounding the alarm for the Day of the Lord was coming, and in fact is very near. The plague of locusts is like a forest fire that consumes everything in its path and the nations writhe in horror before it. This day of the Lord’s judgment is terrible and dreadful (vv. 1-11). However, if the people of Judah will turn to Yahweh with all their hearts and genuine fasting, weeping, and mourning, then He might relent from sending disaster and have pity on His people (vv. 12-17). Now Joel changes from proclaiming doom and despair to the declaring of victory, salvation, and prosperity. Even when a great northern army (Ezekiel 38-39) comes against them, this army would be banished to the two great seas. The Lord would repay them for the years that the locusts have eaten and will restore them so that they would never again be put to shame (vv. 18-27). Joel continues to look forward into the future when God’s Spirit will be poured out on all people during this awe-inspiring Day of the Lord’s judgment, and His rule over all the earth (vv. 28-32). *Where in the New Testament do we find a partial fulfillment of Joel’s prophecies of verses 28-29? Where in the New Testament do we see verse 32 quoted?*

**Joel 3** — At this time, God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, when all the nations are gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the Lord will Judge) to be judged for their great wickedness against God's people. The nations scattered the Israelites, selling them into slavery, and taking their gold to beautify the temple of their gods (vv. 1-13). "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the Day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision (v. 14 ESV)." The Lord will take vengeance on those who oppressed His people, but will be a refuge and stronghold for the Israelites. During this Kingdom age as the Messiah rules, the Jews will have the very presence of the Lord, great material prosperity, and the forgiveness of their sins. This righteous kingdom will not end, but will continue on from generation to generation as long as the earth lasts (vv. 14-21). *How is the prophecy of Joel similar to the prophecy of Ezekiel and Zechariah? Compare Joel 3:18, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8. How do the verses of Joel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah differ from Revelation 22?*

**Amos** — This book was written by Amos (750 B.C.), who was a shepherd and gatherer of sycamore figs, but was called by Yahweh to preach against the sins of Israel during a time of peace and prosperity under the rule of Jeroboam II. The key verse of the book is "But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream (5:24 NKJV)." Although Amos thundered God's judgment and the need of repentance because of the unjust treatment of the poor, its idolatry, and complacency, the people would not listen to him since they believed that greed was good and a form of religiosity was all God required. Amos uses many metaphors to illustrate his pronouncements, including a loaded wagon of grain, a roaring lion, and a basket of summer fruit.

**Amos 1** — Amos was a sheep breeder from Tekoa which was located just 10 miles south of Jerusalem. In today's terms, we would call Amos a layman without proper credentials, who felt God's call to prophesy mostly against Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel. In the first chapter through 2:5, Israel cheers as they hear that Yahweh roars from Zion in judgment on Damascus/Aram (vv. 3-5), Gaza/Philistia (vv. 6-8), Tyre (vv. 9-10), Edom (vv. 11-12), Ammon (vv. 13-15), Moab (2:1-3), and Judah (2:4-5). *Give in abbreviated words, if possible, the sins committed by these nations.*

**Amos 2** — All of a sudden, the people of Israel (Northern Kingdom) become enraged when this farmer from Tekoa begins to expose the evils of this prosperous and proud nation. Amos clearly denounces the seven sins they have committed and which were the very reasons the Amorites, the people they had

dispossessed 650 years earlier, had been removed from the land of Canaan. Now the Lord will crush in judgment the people of Israel just like a loaded wagon of grain crushes anything it rolls over (v. 13). Even the fastest, strongest, bravest, and the most skillful warrior will not be able to escape this day of reckoning declares Yahweh. *Give in simple terms the sins of Israel that the prophet Amos exposed in this chapter? Extra question: The prophet repeats the phrase “for three transgressions (sins) of (the nation) even for four” eight times in these two chapters. What was the meaning of this phrase?*

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