

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 33: Jeremiah 19-36 *When Judgment is Inevitable*

Welcome to Week 33 of the Bible Reading Coach Podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, we will be going through Jeremiah, the second of three weeks that we will spend in this epic, amazing book. Let's bring you up to speed as to where we are. First of all, Jerusalem is now currently under siege. God has called the prophet Jeremiah, to tell them they need to repent of their sins. This is the reason for the siege to begin with. In tears, Jeremiah begs them from the front door of the temple, please repent before God, maybe he can stop. It's still at this point. But they reject Jeremiah, they reject God, they reject the message. Instead, they listen to a bunch of false prophets who are telling them, everything will be great. It may be tough for a while, but it won't be tough for very long. They also try to kill Jeremiah because of the bad news that he's been giving. Now all the way to digging a pit that they plan to throw him in. Jeremiah, at that point his anger overwhelms him and his tears for now at least, are gone.

So we ended last week with Jeremiah going to a potter shop on God's command. And God tells him, "Watch the potter as He forms the pot on the wheel. That is me. I am in charge of Israel, just like the Potter is in charge of making the pot." This is an illustration of God doing whatever he wants to do, then that's where we left last week at Jeremiah chapter 18. This week, we'll be reading Jeremiah, chapters 19 through 36. We'll start with Chapter 19. And in chapter 19, God actually sends Jeremiah to yet another pottery shop. If you've got a couple of days between last week and this week, I wanted to let you know. No, it's another story about another pottery shop. Otherwise, it's like wait a minute, did I already read this? Nope. This time he's being sent to a pottery shop to buy a finished clay jar, which you will then shatter in front of the people. So why do we have two pottery illustrations? Well, they recognize two parts of the situation.

In the first pottery situation where the Potter is making the pot, when we're pliable in God's hands, there's hope for transformation. That's where they have been, this is what God wants from them, like any Potter would want from the clay that they're working with. This should be what we want. Romans 12:2 talks about how we should be transformed by the renewing of our mind. And that word transformed is very much like being made into something new in the potter's hands. That's how we should have it but instead in the start of this coming week's illustration in Jeremiah 19. Instead we've hardened our hearts. And because we've hardened our hearts, we can't be reformed, we have to be broken. That is where they are now, that's what sin does to us. Sin puts us in a point where we have to be, well what Jesus said in John 3 to Nicodemus when he visited him late at night, right? Did you have to be born again? It's not a matter of just minor adjustments. You have to be broken, shattered and then born again. Because once you break pottery, there's nothing more useless than broken pottery. Yeah, we've got all kinds of illustrations about how it gets repaired and stronger where the crack was. The bottom line is, it really can't be done that way. You can't repair broken pottery, we have to be soft, to be transformed. If we're hard, we're going to be broken. So that's what we'll see in Chapter 19.

Chapter 20 then, we'll get to the point where Jeremiah is imprisoned. Last week we read about them trying to kill him, preparing a pit to throw him in. So what happens is a priest named

Pashhur, hates Jeremiah's prophecies so much that he has Jeremiah imprisoned, put into stocks. That's, you know, that where they have holes in the wood to put your head and your arms through where you're immobile. So he's not just in a prison cell, but he's actually immobile in the stocks. Jeremiah, at this point, is so distraught, so upset, so frustrated, so discouraged and so angry at God's people, that he actually gets mad at God. And he accuses God of lying to him, God, you said, you would take care of me, you said you would accomplish this. But this feels like the end of Jeremiah like my end is not going to be seen, God's people turn back to you is not even going to be seen as people punished. My end is going to be dying here in the stocks. He feels totally defeated.

But that's not, of course, the end of his story, because we then get to chapters 21 through 23. The defeat of Jerusalem at this point is so imminent that the King, Zedekiah, sends Pashhur, yes, the priest who originally imprisoned Jeremiah sends Pashhur to go to Jeremiah to say "Can you please ask God on our behalf to rescue us." God, through Jeremiah, says, "No, it's too late." Jeremiah at this point is let out of prison. So God sends him then to the King in chapter 22, where the King is seated on his throne, and to the King seated on his throne, Jeremiah pronounces doom. That he and his priests, because the priests have been so evil, will all face doom along with the people. This is one of these, you know, just kind of low points where it seems like everything's lost. But in the middle of this, this place, where everything seems lost, where Doom is assured, even in the middle of this, in chapter 23, verses 5 and 6, you're going to read a beautiful prophecy. If you know any of the New Testament, it'll sound familiar. And if you know anything about the story of David and who David's ultimate descendant would be, it'll sound familiar as well. It's a wonderful prophecy about Messiah, about Jesus would come eventually, but for the immediate, there is no hope.

We then go to Jeremiah 24 through 29, where he says the fall of Jerusalem is assured at this point, some of the people have been captured, some of them have been exiled. And Jeremiah then prophesied that the total exile from this point on will last a total of 70 years. Now, why does it give them very specific data? 70 years. So that they'll know when the 70 years is over. And they're declared that they can go back, they'll look back at his prophecy and go, Oh, this was God. I mean, he told us, to the year, how long this would be, and it's exactly the 70 years. So that's why when God speaks through the prophets in the Old Testament, He does so with some very specific situations, and even specific dates, so that later we can look back and see the hand of God in it.

Then in chapter 26, again they threaten to kill Jeremiah one more time. His response in chapter 26, is that God gives him an illustration, to give to the people in illustrated sermon, really, he says, I want you to go on, I want you to find a wooden yoke that the oxen wear when they pull a plow, and I want you to put that yoke on your neck. And I want you to walk around with a yoke upon your neck to tell people "this is what I'm going to do to the king and to the nation, you are going to be a beasts of burden like an ox will be this is how evil you have become." And this is what's coming to you. In 28, a false prophet. We've talked about them before, right? One of the false prophets named Hananiah hates Jeremiah and his negative prophecy so much that he actually grabs the yoke, he breaks it and says, "Yeah, the yoke is there, and it'll happen for a while but it won't be that bad. It's only going to last two years. We'll wear a yoke, but then it'll be broken." And Jeremiah says, "You know what? Because of this, because of your obedience, it's going to be a worse yoke. It's not going to be a yoke of wood, it

will be a yoke of iron. It cannot be broken. And by the way, Hananiah, because you just did this, you're going to be dead soon." And sure enough, very shortly after that within the year, Hananiah falls dead.

Jeremiah then writes and sends a letter telling the exiles, alright, settle into your exile. It's going to be a long time. We see that in chapter 29. And then God tells Jeremiah to tell them this in chapter 21, verses 9 through 10. "Whoever stays in the city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live, he will escape with his life." Yes, God's message at this point to the people in Jerusalem is surrender to Babylon. If you allow them to attack, they will win and they will be brutal. You know the Babylonians. Your only hope for getting out of this without absolute destruction is to surrender to the Babylonians right now, which, of course, they refuse to do.

Chapters 30 through 35. There's a bit of a ray of hope that comes into all of this mess. God never leaves his people without hope. He tells them that eventually, even after this exile, eventually you will return to the land. And he even tells Jeremiah in chapter 32, I want you to go and buy a plot of land as proof that the land will be returned to your people, eventually.

And then this week's reading is going to end with chapter 36, where Jeremiah, at this point, has been prophesying for 23 years. And he hasn't written it down yet. So God tells him with the scribe, Baruch, to write all of this down so that later when it all comes true, they'll have the evidence of it. We'll see that in chapter 36. He then sends the scribe, Baruch, to read the scroll, which is at this point, basically chapters 1 through 35 of this book. So in chapter 36, he writes down chapters 1 through 35, he sends the scribe to read chapters 1 through 35, to the people and to the king, King Jehoiakim. He sends for the scroll to be brought in, he hears that it's been read to the people, he sends for the scroll. And when he receives the scroll instead of reading it and heeding it, he burns it in anger. At that point, Jeremiah and Baruch, rewrite the scroll, which again, is chapters 1 through 35 of this book, and they add a few new choice prophecies, which we now have in Chapters 1 through 35 of this book, including the story of this girl being burned and a prophecy about how Jehoiakim will die in shame.

Wow, there's a lot going on, isn't there? So what do you look for this week, as we're reading through Jeremiah, chapters 19 through 36. Take a look at what to look for. First of all, note God's patience. Even when doom is inevitable, God gives them a chance to surrender so that they can at least make it easier on them. God always has mercy in his heart if we will turn and do the right thing. Note that Jeremiah, although he's abused in so many ways, he takes that abuse because he knows he's on God's side, that God has given them this message. And note also, that when he does get mad at God, and he complains to God and whines and fusses in frustration, God's like, "That's okay, you're allowed to do that." It's not ideal, but God doesn't condemn him for being upset and frustrated over the difficulties that he's going through. Note also, that even people who reject God when things are not good, they tend to run to Him for rescue, right? They've rejected God, rejected God, rejected God. It finally gets so bad that the king goes, "Hey, priest. You're the one who threw Jeremiah in prison, right? Go get him and ask if he can give us a good prophecy." Because he's the one who's the true one.

So it's amazing. We can reject God over and over again. And when we're really in a bad way, we turn back to him again anyway. But note also, that there is an end, even to the patience of God. We never want to live in a way that the patience of God runs out for us. And even if it does, we got to notice we've noted with the Messiah prophecy that we'll read this week, there is

always hope. In the long run, God will always have his way, good will always win over evil. Again, a lot to cover this week is an epic book. Not a lot of big things happen in the epic this week. I hope you'll get a lot out of this reading. And I hope this lesson will help you get a lot more out of it. All right, thanks a lot. We'll see you next week.

If you'd like to support this ministry, and help put resources like this into the hands of the people who need them the most, go to KarlVaters.com/support. For an outline of the entire Bible Reading plan, go to KarlVaters.com/bibleoutline. And if you'd like a transcript of this episode, it's available at KarlVaters.com/transcripts. If you're a church leader, and you'd like to get a transcript of each episode a week in advance, subscribe to our free newsletter at KarlVaters.com/subscribe. All these links are in the show notes. This episode was produced by Veronica Beaver. The theme music was written and performed by Jack Wilkins of JackWilkinsmusic.com. And me? I'm Karl Vaters and I'm your Bible Reading Coach.