



OHBC MEMORY VERSE – WEEK #32

THIS WEEK'S VERSE: JONAH 2:8

"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."

Why Jonah 2:8?

Because it is such a powerful "proverb" about life!

The story of Jonah is such a familiar one we won't take a lot of time to develop the context. As you know, God called Jonah to go to Ninevah. Rather than go to Ninevah, however, Jonah fled in the

exact opposite direction, going to Joppa with hopes of going on to Tarshish. While on a ship heading to Tarshish, Jonah found that you can run from God, but you certainly can't hide! God sent a storm that ultimately led to Jonah being thrown overboard. In God's sovereignty, mercy, and grace, He appointed a "great fish" (i.e. huge) to swallow Jonah before he drowned in the tempestuous sea.

While in the belly of the fish, Jonah offers a prayer to the Lord (2:1-10). There are many things worth noting about Jonah's prayer for which time and space will not allow, but this week's memory verse is in the context of Jonah's prayer. The verse stands out because it seems to be so "out of place" in the prayer, not so much because of the subject matter, but in the fact that it stands in the text more like one of the Proverbs, than it does on of the requests of prayer in the Psalms. The "Proverb," as it were, is as applicable in our day as it was Jonah's!

Jonah says in Jonah 2:8, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." We might be able to say it this way, "Whatever you choose to build your life upon better be able to provide you help and answers when the bottom drops out!"

The "lying vanities" on which people build their lives ("observe") are many in the 21st century. Their is the "lying vanity" of religion, the "lying vanity" of psychology and psychiatry, the "lying vanity" of humanism, hedonism, Epicureanism, pragmatism, agnosticism, naturalism, and a boatload of other "isms" that have absolutely no way to provide answers to the real questions and issues of life.

May hiding this verse in our hearts cause us to more passionately "observe" the "Truth" of the Word of God (in contrast to the "lying vanities" of this world), that we may receive its "mercy" in our time of struggle and need.

DAY 156

TODAY'S READING: ISAIAH 40-45

OVERVIEW: Judah's future captivity in Babylon and promise of deliverance (40:1-11); God's omnipotence (40:12-26); God's sustaining power (40:27-31); God's sovereignty in history (41:1-7); God's protection of Israel (41:8-20); God's challenge to the idols (41:21-29); the Servant of the LORD (42:1-25); assurance of Israel's restoration (43:1-44:5); the witness of the restored nation (44:6-23); the fulfillment of restoration (44:24-45:25).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In the microcosm of the Bible that we call the Book of Isaiah, having covered the first 39 chapters, representative of the Old Testament, we begin today the section representative of the New Testament. Interestingly, as we come to chapter 40, Isaiah begins, as does Matthew in the New Testament, with "The voice of him (John the Baptist – Matt. 3:1-3) that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (40:3). Just as a little sidelight, this is one of my favorite little "ditties" to show Jehovah's False Witnesses outside the doors of my house (II John 7-10) just before I lovingly tell them they are of an antichrist spirit (II John 7). Note that when Isaiah makes this prophecy, John the Baptist, he says, will be preparing the way of "Jehovah." Every time you see the word "LORD" in our King James Bible written in all capital letters, as in verse 40:3, it is signifying that this is the Hebrew word for "Jehovah."! When the prophecy is fulfilled in Matt. 3:1-3, Jehovah is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ!!! The same incredible truth also took place earlier in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 6. In Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah saw "Jehovah" (the "LORD" of hosts — KJV) in all of His glory. When the Holy Spirit

writes of this (II Pet. 1:21) in John 12:37-41, He says that Isaiah was seeing CHRIST'S (!!!) glory and spoke of CHRIST!!! And all of God's people said, AMEN!!!

Hey, this is way too much fun to stop now! Let me show you a few more little Jehovah's False Witness "ditties." In chapter 42:8, God clearly says that "GLORY" belongs to "JEHOVAH" ("the LORD" – KJV) ALONE: "I am the LORD: that is my name ("Jehovah"): and my glory will I not give to another." John 1:14 says, "And the Word (Christ – John 1:1) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Very simply, in light of Isaiah 42:8, if Jesus Christ isn't "Jehovah," where did He get His glory? Hopefully, you're seeing how monumental these verses are! In John 17:5, as Jesus prayed to "Jehovah," His Father, He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Again, in light of Isaiah 42:8, why would Jesus ask for something "Jehovah" doesn't give?

In chapter 43 and verse 10, God makes reference to His "witnesses." These are what we like to call the "True Jehovah's Witnesses"! And in verse 11, God says very clearly, that there is only one "Jehovah" ("the LORD" – KJV), and "Jehovah" is the ONLY SAVIOUR: "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour." Check out Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our SAVIOUR Jesus Christ." Notice that Jesus Christ is referred to as the "SAVIOUR" (Isa. 43:11), and that He is "THE GREAT GOD"! Not "a" God. "THE" GOD!!!

In chapter 44 and verse 6, it lets us know that "Jehovah" ("the LORD" – KJV) is the ONLY eternal God, and that the attribute of being "the first and the last" is only true of "Jehovah God." In light of the clear teaching of this verse, check out Revelation 1:10-11: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice (the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ in the context!), as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, THE FIRST AND THE LAST" !!!

And just one more. In chapter 44 and verse 24 says that "Jehovah" ("the LORD" – KJV) made "all things" by HIMSELF ("myself"). In light of that, check out John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:16: "ALL THINGS(!!!) were made by him (the "Word," the Lord Jesus Christ!); and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). "For by him (the "Son" – Col. 1:13, again, the Lord Jesus Christ!) were ALL THINGS (just as in Isa. 44:24) created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS (there it is again!) were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:16). How 'bout them apples for God proving that Jesus Christ, His Son, is "JEHOVAH"!

To help you keep the flow going in Isaiah in the chapters of today's reading, follow the sequence listed in today's more extensive "OVERVIEW."

#### SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO "THE DAY OF THE LORD":

40:10 – "the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him."

42:4 – "till he have set judgment in the earth"

42:13 – "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man"

#### CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As JEHOVAH in the verses in today's reading listed above – Isa. 40:3; 42:8; 43:10-11; 44:6; 44:24 As SHEPHERD – Isa. 40:11 (John 10:11) As CREATOR – Isa. 40:28 (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16) As REDEEMER – Isa. 41:14 (Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9) As HE TO WHOM EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW AND EVERY TONGUE SWEAR (CONFESS) – Isa. 45:23 (Phil. 2:10).

DAY 157

TODAY'S READING: ISAIAH 46-52

OVERVIEW: Israel's preservation and restoration from Babylon (46:1-47:15); admonition to the restored nation (48:1-22); the mission of the Servant (Messiah) (49:1-26); the submission of the Servant (Messiah) (50:1-11); the provision by the Servant (Messiah) (51:1-52:12).

#### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In yesterday's reading we saw the Lord's prophecy through Isaiah to raise up Cyrus, the Persian King, to conquer the Babylonians and set free the captives of Israel, enabling them to return to their land. Do note, however, that Cyrus only prefigures "the Lords' anointed." (45:1), the Lord Jesus Christ, who will

one day (soon!) establish His Millennial Kingdom and restore Israel to her homeland. “In that day,” all of the Gentile nations of the world will submit themselves to the rule of Israel’s King, and “every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (45:23).

In chapters 46 and 47, Isaiah details Babylon’s collapse, along with its gods. God declares that Babylon’s gods are absolutely powerless to rescue Babylon from His impending judgment and destruction. Just as God raised up Cyrus from the east (46:11) to conquer Israel’s oppressor, the Lord Jesus Christ will also rise from the east as the “SUN of righteousness” to deliver the Nation of Israel on the “day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:1-2)!

In chapter 48, like many in “Laodicea” (Rev. 3:14-22), the Lord indicts those who confess His Name and even profess the same in baptism (devotional application), but it can’t be recognized by the life they live (48:1). The chapter goes on to show that because of Israel’s stubbornness (“thy neck is an iron sinew” – 48:4a) and obstinacy (“thy brow brass” – 48:4b), the Lord would discipline them by allowing them to be brought into Babylonian captivity. Even so, He promises to bring them back. Praise the Lord for His marvelous grace and mercy, because we need it in our stubbornness and obstinacy just as surely as does/did Israel!

As we enter chapter 49, the Lord reveals His Servant (the Messiah), and how He will restore Israel both physically and spiritually in the Promised Land. Though “Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (49:14) the Lord promises that He will not “forsake” or “forget” them! Even though they rejected Him (John 1:11), He will still fulfill His purposes and promises to them, ultimately bringing blessing to Israel, along with the Gentile nations of the world, in the Millennium (49:22, 25-26). Chapter 50 contrasts the disobedience of Israel, with the obedience of Israel’s Servant (Messiah).

In chapters 51 and 52, the Nation of Israel is exhorted to “look” (51:1, 2) through the eyes of the faith into the future to see the LORD, the Comforter of Zion (51:3), as He rescues Israel from the nations, bringing them into their land, and into the blessing of Messiah’s rule in the Millennial Kingdom, when they will no longer be afflicted by the Gentile nations (52:1). In light of His promise of deliverance, Israel is exhorted to “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” (52:9-10).

I, personally, can’t wait for the “suffering Servant” (i.e. “his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” – 52:14) to “be exalted and extolled, and be very high” (52:13), when “the kings [of the nations] shall shut their mouths at him” (52:15). And, once again, with the Apostle John we cry out, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20)!

#### SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO “THE DAY OF THE LORD”:

46:13 – “I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” 51:3 – “the Lord will comfort Zion” 51:11 – “the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion.” 52:6 – “in that day” 52:8 – “when the Lord shall bring again Zion” 52:10 – “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations” 52:10 – “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God”

#### CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE FIRST AND THE LAST – Isa. 48:12 (Rev. 1:11; 2:8; 22:13).

As THY SAVIOUR AND REDEEMER – Isa. 49:26 (Titus 2:13-14; II Pet. 1:1; I Cor. 6:20; Gal. 4:4-5; I Pet. 1:18-19).

DAY 158

TODAY’S READING: ISAIAH 53-59

OVERVIEW: The humiliation of the Servant (Messiah) (53:1-12); the blessings of the Servant (Messiah) (54:1-55:13); the blessing of God upon the Gentiles (56:1-8); the condemnation of God upon the wicked (56:9-57:21); the restoration of true worship (58:1-14); the transgression of Israel (59:1-8); the confession of Israel (59:9-15a); the Lord’s deliverance of Israel (59:15b-21).

## HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Isaiah 53 is one of the most incredible chapters in the entire Bible. It was this very chapter that the Ethiopian eunuch was struggling to understand out on that desert road in Acts 8, when the Lord prompted Philip to ask him if he understood what he was reading. When he responded, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31), "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto Him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Philip used this passage to lead this Ethiopian dignitary to Christ, and it is commonly believed that it was through his conversion that the gospel first made its way into the continent of Africa in the first century. This is the most comprehensive, and yet concise passage in the entire Bible concerning the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of its significance, we will devote most of our attention to this chapter of today's reading.

In verses 1-3, Isaiah prophesies the rejection that our Lord would endure. John 1:11 says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." By the time the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth, the Jews were living under the oppression domination of Rome. The Messiah they were looking for was a political revolutionary who would come in warrior-like fashion to overthrow the Roman government and establish His own Kingdom and empire on the earth – a Kingdom in which the Jews would be preeminent. They failed to understand that the physical oppression of Rome under Caesar was just a minor illustration of a spiritual oppression they were experiencing because of sin, and the fact that they were being held in the "snare" of this world by the very will of Satan himself (II Tim. 2:26; Eph. 2:2). They failed to realize that in order for their Messiah and King to have citizens in His kingdom, the sin issue that caused spiritual death in them (Gen. 2:17; Rom 5:12) would have to be dealt with, and that they would need to call upon the name of the Lord to be delivered from their sin, and experience a spiritual birth, before even they, the Jews, would qualify for kingdom citizenship. They failed to realize that their Messiah would take up a cross before He would take up His crown; that there would be humiliation before His exaltation; that there would be suffering before there would be glory.

Isaiah begins in verse one to foreshadow the fact that there would be difficulty for the Jews "believing," once the "arm of the Lord" (the Lord Jesus Christ) was "revealed" on the earth. Their difficulty, Isaiah says in verse 2, is how He came into this world. He came as a humble bush ("tender plant"), not as a stalwart tree. "Dry ground" is a reference to the barren spiritual condition of the Nation of Israel when their Messiah would be "revealed." He came offering life to the parched soil of their lives, but it wasn't the life they were looking for. He didn't come on the scene displaying the power and majesty that would attract them to Him ("he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" – 53:2). Because of it, the Jews "despised and rejected" God's glorious Servant, and their Messiah. He who is the King of kings became "a man of sorrows." The One to whom belonged all glory, was "acquainted with grief." The One who offered life and forgiveness to all who would simply look to Him, had his own people "hide" their "faces from him." The One who should have been lauded and honored, was "despised" and "esteemed not."

Even though He came to bare the "griefs" and the "sorrows" man inflicted upon himself through the choice of sin, it was of no consequence. The Lord Jesus Christ was treated as a common criminal, one worthy of the treatment He received (53:4).

Note in verse 5 the price that he paid through His crucifixion: He was "wounded;" "bruised;" "chastised;" "striped" (referring to the stripes upon His back through being scourged with whips). Notice also in verse 5, the reason for such brutality: It was "for our transgressions." It was "for our iniquities." It was so we might experience "peace" – "peace" with God, and thus, "peace" with ourselves. It was so we could be "healed." It was because every one of us had "gone astray," turning from God "to our own way." It was the Father providing His only begotten Son to die a substitutionary death for our sin ("the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"). Through the entire ordeal of His unfair trial and merciless crucifixion, never did "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) ever "open his mouth" (53:7-8).

Isaiah said that when He died, it would be with "the wicked" (i.e. crucified between two thieves), and yet His burial would be connected with "the rich" (i.e. He "borrowed" the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, or rich man – Matt. 27:57).

And yet, all of this, according to verses 10-12, was purposed and planned by God! It is the same incomprehensible truth Peter preached about on the Day of Pentecost. That Christ was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23)!

You can keep your bearings through today's reading by following the content of the chapters detailed in today's overview, but do allow yourself to lose your bearings today in the wonder of our glorious Saviour and His willingness to offer Himself as a sacrifice for us as it is detailed in Isaiah 53. Pray that, like Philip, God will allow you to use this chapter today to "preach Jesus" to some needy soul.

#### CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ONE WHO WAS REJECTED BY HIS OWN – Isa. 53:3 (John 1:11; Luke 23:18)

As the ONE WHO REMAINED SILENT THOUGH FALSELY ACCUSED – Isa. 53:7 (Mark 15:3-5).

As the ONE WHO WAS BURIED WITH THE RICH – Isa. 53:9 (Matt. 27:57-60).

As the ONE WHO WAS CRUCIFIED WITH SINNERS – Isa. 53:12 (Mark 15:27-28).

DAY 159

TODAY'S READING: ISAIAH 60-66

OVERVIEW: The exaltation of Jerusalem in the day of the Lord (60:1-22); the mission of the Messiah in His first coming (61:1-2a) ; the mission of the Messiah in His second coming (61:2b-11); the restoration of Zion (62:1-63:6); the petition of Israel (63:7-64:12); God's response to Israel's prayer (65:1-25); the blessing of God in the Millennial Kingdom (66:1-24).

#### HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

All the way through the Book of Isaiah, God has been pointing us through the prophet to that incredible day when the Lord Jesus Christ will establish His rule and reign in His Millennial Kingdom.

Once again, that is the theme and focal point in the chapters in today's reading (60-66). When the remnant of Israel returned into their homeland following the Babylonian captivity, the city, with its walls, gates, and temple was in shambles ("laidwaste" – 64:10-11). It was anything but glorious. But Isaiah looks down through the years to a time when the Lord Jesus Christ has stepped in and changed all of that. Interestingly, the word "glory," or one of its forms (glorify, glorified, glorious) is found 23 times in these seven chapters of Isaiah alone.

We are presently living in a biblical "nighttime." The "night" began in Acts 1:9 when Jesus ascended back to the right hand of His Father, because Jesus had clearly said in John 9:5 – "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." At that point, the "Sun" went down, so to speak, and it became night as far as God is concerned (Rom. 13:12; I Thess. 5:5-7; Phil 2:15). We now await the glorious day when the "Sun (Mal. 4:1-2 – note, capital S-U-N, not S-O-N!!!) of righteousness" will "arise" and the light will again shine on this planet and it will be "the DAY of the Lord"! This is exactly what Isaiah is prophesying in 60:1-2 "Arise, shine; for the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." In that day, as Isaiah goes on to explain in verses 3-9, the Gentile nations will be coming in peace to Jerusalem, offering gifts to "the Holy One of Israel," the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. At that time, as Isaiah describes in verses 10-22, the walls of the nation will be rebuilt (60:10), and the "gate shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night" (60:11), implying that there will no longer be the threat of an invading nation or nations (also, see 60:18).

Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 61 were read by the Lord Jesus Christ in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus concluded the reading by saying, "this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," letting us know that Isaiah 60:1-2 refers to Him, if there could be any doubt of that in anyone's mind. It is quite interesting to note that when Jesus read those verses, He very purposely and calculatedly stopped in the middle of verse 2, before reading "and the day of vengeance of our God." We now know that the reason He didn't read it, was because the fulfillment of the prophecy was dependent upon what the Nation of Israel would do with their opportunity to receive her King. When Israel refused her final offer of the Kingdom at the stoning of Stephen, God inserted a parenthesis we call the Church Age, and now "the day of vengeance of our God" (i.e. Tribulation/Second Coming) will not kick in until God's plan for the church has been accomplished. Because "the day of vengeance of our God" has not yet started, it lets us know that we are still presently living in what God calls "the acceptable year of the Lord"! We must "redeem the time" making sure that we "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4:5). Notice in Isaiah 61:2, that following the Tribulation and Second Coming ("the day of vengeance"), the Lord will "comfort all that mourn" (Millennium), and will flip-flop Israel's suffering and affliction into blessing and rejoicing.

Though Israel in Isaiah's day was God's "forsaken" wife (62:4) and had been left "desolate" because of her whoredoms, when the Lord Jesus Christ establishes His kingdom, Israel will be called "Hephzibah" ("my delight is in her"), and "Beulah" ("married"), as once again, she will be "married" to Jehovah, and He will "delight" in her (Hos. 2:16-17). (Remember, Israel is the bride of the Father, we (the church) are the bride of Christ.)

Chapter 63 pictures Christ as a bloody warrior. At His first coming, His enemies stained Him with His own blood. When Isaiah sees Him here at His Second Coming, once again, He will be stained with blood. This time, however, it is not His own blood, but the blood of His enemies (63:1-4)! Never lose sight of the fact that He who is (was) the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6) in His first coming, will be a "Man of War" (Ex. 15:3) at His second coming!

Chapter 65 records the Lord's response to the prayer of His remnant, and chapter 66 describes the true worship of the Messiah in His Millennial Kingdom. As we conclude the Book of Isaiah, what we have called "a microcosm of the Bible," note that chapter 66 covers the same ground as the Book of Revelation (Tribulation, Second Coming, Millennium, New Heaven and New Earth).

#### SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO "THE DAY OF THE LORD":

60:1 – "the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

60:2 – "the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." 60:7 – "I will glorify the house of my glory." 60:13 – "I will make the place of my feet glorious" 60:20 – "the days of thy mourning shall be ended" 61:2 – "the day of vengeance of our God"

63:4 – "the day of vengeance"

63:4 – "the year of my redeemed"

66:15 – "the Lord will come with fire"

66:18 – "I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory"

#### CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ANOINTED ONE PREACHING GOOD TIDINGS – Isa. 61:1 (Luke 4:16-22).

As the CREATOR OF NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH – Isa. 65:17; 66:2 (John 1:1-3; II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

As the ONE WHOSE GLORY WILL BE WITNESSED BY ALL NATIONS – Isa. 66:18-19 (Rev. 5:12-13).

#### DAY 160

#### INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was used of God to prophesy during the last 40 years of the small Southern Kingdom of Judah's history. By the time Jeremiah begins his ministry, it had been 100 years since the Assyrians had destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As the Assyrian empire weakened through the years, of course, they were overthrown by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah's ministry actually began in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (627 B.C.) according to (1:2), who ruled for 31 years (II Chron. 34:1). His ministry continued through the reigns of the last four kings of Judah, all of whom, as we saw coming through II Chronicles and II Kings, were wicked (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah). As Jeremiah notes in 1:3, his ministry concluded with "the carrying away of Jerusalem captive," which was in 586 B.C.

Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as "the Weeping Prophet" (see 9:1; 13:17; 14:17; 15:17-18; Lam. 1:2; 2:11, 18). His tears flowed out of his passion for God's glory (13:15-17), and Israel's "backsliding" from her God. "Backsliding" is the key word in the Book (see 2:19; 3:6,8,11-12, 22; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7), for which cause the word "repent" is used 11 times by the prophet. Though repentance was his continual message, Judah never did. No Old Testament prophet suffered more opposition than did Jeremiah (2:8, 26; 4:9; 5:31; 6:14; 14:13-16; 18:18; 23:9-40; 26:8-19; 27:9-16; chapters 28-29).

It is important to realize that the Book of Jeremiah is not necessarily arranged in chronological order, but by similar subject matter. Remember, the Bible is not laid out according to how American's think. We think linearly (i.e. in a line). The Bible is an Asian Book. It is presented in a circle. By presenting the truth of Jeremiah by similar subject, it helps us to see more clearly the tragic results of sin.

Perhaps the simplest breakdown of the Book is as follows:

The Fate of Judah (1-33)

The Fate of Jerusalem (34-45)

The Fate of the Gentile Nations (46-52)

TODAY'S READING: JEREMIAH 1-4

OVERVIEW:

God's call of Jeremiah (1:1-19); God's explanation that Israel was an unfaithful spouse (2:1-3:5); God's explanation that there was still time for Israel to repent (3:6-4:4); God's warning of judgment for refusing to repent (4:5-31).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As mentioned in the "Introduction," Jeremiah details in verses 2 and 3 of chapter one that the period in which he prophesied was approximately between 627-587 B.C. His ministry spanned from Judah's last RIGHTEOUS king (Josiah; 640-609 B.C.) to Judah's last ACTUAL king (Zedekiah; 597-587 B.C.).

Verse 3 lets us know that Jeremiah lived to see Jerusalem destroyed by the Babylonians, an event he both prophesied and lamented. God's call upon Jeremiah as it is revealed in chapter one forever settles the question of when life begins. The Bible is very clear that life begins before our actual birth (Jer. 1:5; Psalm 139:14-15), and continues on after our actual death (Heb. 9:27)! God tells Jeremiah that a whole lot had taken place concerning him even before He formed him in his mother's womb: He "knew" him; He "sanctified" him; and "ordained" him to be "a prophet unto the nations." The same thing could be said about God's purposes for your life!

Much as in the case of God's call upon Moses (Ex. 3:11), Jeremiah's initial response was to focus on his own inadequacies and inabilities. God tells Jeremiah, as He did Moses (Ex. 3:14), that His call upon his life wasn't about who Jeremiah was, but who He was! He tells Jeremiah: "I'll send you; I'll tell you what to say; when the people don't like it, I'll deliver you; I'll put my words in your mouth, because I have set you over the nations and the kingdoms" (1:7-10).

God tells Jeremiah that his actual ministry would be six-fold: 1) "to root out" 2) "to pull down" 3) "to destroy" 4) "to throw down" 5) "to build" 6) "to plant." Interestingly, two-thirds of Jeremiah's ministry was intended by God to be negative. Perhaps this is a good time to make sure we understand what a "prophet" was actually being called to do. Basically, we could say that a prophet in the Bible was a man that God raised up to take God's side against the people who had turned away from him.

Obviously, there were other implications, but that's it in a nutshell. It is not much different than what God intends for a New Testament preacher. In fact, it is interesting to note that two-thirds of the ministry of a preacher of the Word of God, God intends to be negative! God said through Paul in II Timothy 4:2, that a preacher of the Word must "reprove" (negative), "rebuke" (negative) and "exhort" (positive) "with all longsuffering and doctrine." No wonder Jeremiah had it so tough in his day, and no wonder those who "preach the Word" have it so tough in our day (Rev. 3:14-22)! In Laodicea, just as in Jeremiah's day, God's side isn't a whole lot like His people's side! In fact, Jesus said it's the exact opposite! "Because thou sayest (here's what we think about ourselves), I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not (here's what Jesus says is really true of ourselves) that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

Notice in 1:17-19, God didn't tell Jeremiah that his task would be easy, in fact, He warned that it could be very intimidating ("be not dismayed at their faces" – 1:17), and that it would be a constant battle ("they shall fight against thee" – 1:19). Amidst the difficulty, however, God commanded Jeremiah to "suck it up" (i.e. "gird up thy loins" – 1:17), and promised His abiding presence and power. ("I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee" – 1:19). How much difficulty and adversity could you endure in your mission with a promise like that? Check out God's promise to us in our mission in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. God ye THEREFORE (And, implied is that He is going to empower us with His power!) ... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!"

In chapter 2 and through 3:5, God has some incredibly strong things to say to Jeremiah about His people. He even likens them to an unfaithful, adulterous spouse, in contrast to God's constant faithfulness and goodness to them. He tells Jeremiah (2:1-3) that Israel had forgotten her devotion to Him in her "youth" (when God had first delivered them out of Egypt – i.e. her "first love" – Rev. 2:4); that she had become

ungrateful (2:4-8); had changed her God (2:9-13); had ignored God's discipline (2:14-19); had denied any wrongdoing (2:20-28); had mistreated the poor (2:29-37); and had been sleeping around (3:1-5).

In spite of her sin, however, God tells Jeremiah that He is merciful, and that He is willing to forgive her if she will simply return to Him, and put away her other lovers (3:6-4:4). What a God!

In 4:5-31, God tells Jeremiah that though Israel has time to repent, He is only providing a window of time to do so. He warns that if they refuse to return to Him, He will send an army to annihilate their nation.

SPECIFIC REFERENCES TO "THE DAY OF THE LORD":

3:16 – "in those days" (specifically, the Tribulation Period)

3:17 – "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord"

3:18 – "in those days" (specifically, the Tribulation Period)

4:9 – "at that day"

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS – Jeremiah 2:13 (John 7:37, 4:1-26).