

# SERMON | A LETTER TO THE EXILES

## SERIES | STRANGE LAND

STUDY GUIDE | RYAN ROMEO | SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024

### SERMON SUMMARY

Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet of the southern kingdom of Judah. The time of Jeremiah takes place 136 years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Hosea). Jeremiah is young, probably in his late teens to early 20s. He preached over forty years and across five different Judean Kings. He prophesied exile to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah's calling was to tear down the unjust, deceptive roots of idolatry, and plant a new thing in exile (Jeremiah 1:9-10). Jeremiah is warning Israel that things are bad and leading to exile. The worship of Canaanite gods had snuck in and even leading some to sacrifice children. The priests and leaders had become corrupt and prideful (Jeremiah 23:9-11). The prophets are lying about how serious it is (Jeremiah 23:16). The Lord is calling Israel to repentance, to acknowledge their guilt and rebellion, and He will heal their faithfulness.

Are we facing exile or already in exile today? More than 25% of Americans say they are atheist or religiously unaffiliated. 1 in 8 Americans stopped going to church in the last 25 years. Since 2020 more Americans have left the church than all previous American revivals put together. As we see God given instruction for their time in exile (Jeremiah 29:4-9), we would be wise to take note for the strange land we are living in. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land (Psalm 137:5)?

#### Build houses, plant gardens, and grow the next generation:

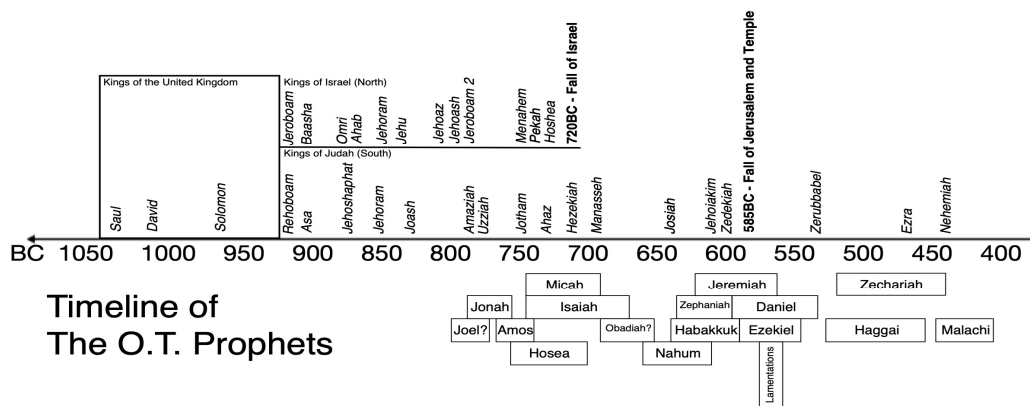
- Don't just lay and wait for the bottom to fall out.
- Things are bad. Pray, draw near to God, re-work your priorities, and live your life.
- If you change, it affects the body of Christ.

#### Seek the welfare of the city:

- "Shalom" of the city.
- "Shalom means wholeness, the dynamic, vibrating health of a society that pulses with divinely directed purpose, and surges with life-transforming love. Seek the shalom and pray for it." (Peterson)

#### Don't listen to lying voices (exercise discernment):

- Don't listen to those saying, "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jeremiah 8:11).
- Don't grow weary (Jeremiah 12:5).



## SCRIPTURE READING

**READ THIS WEEKS BIBLE PASSAGE: Jeremiah 1:9-10, 8:11, 23:9-11, 23:16, 29:4-9, 12:5 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup> See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.” – Jeremiah 1:9-10

<sup>11</sup> They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace. – Jeremiah 8:11

### Lying Prophets

<sup>9</sup> Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and because of his holy words. <sup>10</sup> For the land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land mourns, and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up. Their course is evil, and their might is not right. <sup>11</sup> “Both prophet and priest are ungodly; even in my house I have found their evil, declares the LORD. – Jeremiah 23:9-11

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. – Jeremiah 23:16

<sup>4</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup> Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. <sup>8</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, <sup>9</sup> for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD. – Jeremiah 29:4-9

### The LORD Answers Jeremiah

<sup>5</sup> “If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses? And if in a safe land you are so trusting, what will you do in the thicket of the Jordan? – Jeremiah 12:5

## BIBLE PASSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you in these passages? Did the Lord highlight anything to you? What do these passages teach you about the character of God? What do these passages teach you about mankind? What do these passages teach you about how mankind should respond to God? What do these passages teach you about how to respond to others?

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Read these passages again (use a different translation if helpful). How did these passages help to convict, correct, or encourage you?

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## **GROUP DISCUSSION**

### **DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP**

1. What was the cry of Jeremiah's heart as he contemplated the judgments, he was announcing in Jeremiah 8:18-21? How does this impact you to be an example of Christlikeness to those around you and stand firm in the faith?
2. Do you feel like an exile in our culture?
3. How can you build, exercise discernment, and seek the welfare of our society?
4. In what areas of your life do you need to repent, turn to Christ, and refocus on building God's kingdom?

## **PRAYER**

Take some time for prayer requests and pray over one another before wrapping up.

