

Jeremiah

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, . . . the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Book of Jeremiah using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to Reading the Prophets*—especially the section on Jeremiah—will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don’t miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church’s criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God’s unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church’s living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you’ll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shining 12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure. 14 Do all th tioning, ¹⁵that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven . . . earth . . . under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God’s g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

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Prepare

Read the Introduction to Jeremiah, paying particular attention to *The Prophet and His Times*, *The Message of the Prophet*, and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Jeremiah to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Jeremiah, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Jeremiah as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:5.** When did God choose Jeremiah to be a prophet? What image does the Hebrew verb *yāšar* suggest? What does Catholic tradition infer from this passage? According to St. Cyril of Jerusalem, why is God not unashamed to take human flesh, since he is its Creator? As the language of divine election, what does “I knew you” mean? What does being consecrated accomplish? Although Jeremiah is sent mainly to the people of Judah, to whom else will he speak oracles of judgment? How does Paul allude to this verse in Gal 1:15, and what does he imply about himself?
2. **1:6.** Of whom is Jeremiah’s initial objection to God’s call typical? In what other figures can the same reaction be seen? How does the Lord respond to the resistance of those he calls to service? Probably how old was Jeremiah when God called him?
3. **1:9.** For what service does Jeremiah’s encounter with God equip him? How were Isaiah and Ezekiel similarly prepared for prophetic ministry? What words is the prophet given, and with what is his message invested? How does the passage use language from Deut 18:18? However, in whom is the coming of a prophet of Moses’ stature only fully realized?
4. **1:19.** What reception will Jeremiah face? Beyond needing courage, of what is the prophet made aware? Like Isaiah and Ezekiel, with what is Jeremiah tasked? What is characteristic of prophetic ministry in the OT and is likewise a hallmark of apostolic ministry in the NT? According to St. John Cassian, how is a victory worthy of praise to be gained?

For application

1. **1:5.** How does this verse echo Ps 139? How long before you were born did the Lord know you? For what purpose were you born?
2. **1:6.** Have you ever resisted doing something you felt the Lord wanted you to do? If so, what were some of your excuses? What opportunities for grace do you most regret missing? What opportunities are you most grateful for accepting?
3. **1:10.** In a society like ours, what attitudes, ideologies, or practices primarily among Christians do you think Jeremiah would pluck up and tear down, and what would he build and plant? How might your answers reflect upon your own prophetic role?
4. **1:17.** What most dismays or frightens you about the opposition to the Gospel that Christians face today? How have you prepared yourself to stand up to it? What does the Lord mean by saying that if you are dismayed, he will dismay you (cf. Lk 9:26)?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:3.** What does it mean for Israel to be holy? What are the first fruits? Who were the only ones allowed to eat the first fruits? Theologically, of what harvest is Israel the first fruits, and what is that equivalent to saying? In Jas 1:18, to whom is the same expression applied? As the family of Abraham, what privilege did Israel enjoy?
2. **2:13.** What are cisterns? What do they represent here? What are living waters? For what does Jesus use this expression? According to St. Athanasius, what image have the sacred writers given us of the divine Son?
3. **2:20.** Of what is the yoke an image? After the Israelites were freed from the yoke of bondage in Egypt, to what did they bind themselves? How is breaking the yoke equivalent to breaking the covenant? To what does the expression “high hill and green tree” refer? To what is idolatry compared? What fact does the use of sexual metaphors for idolatry mirror?
4. **2:27.** To what do a tree and a stone refer here? Why does Jeremiah, speaking with sarcasm, reverse the sexual roles of these objects? What does addressing these objects as “You are my father” imply?

For application

1. **2:8.** How does it happen that a theologian who studies Scripture professionally disbelieves its message, or that one who teaches the faith has no personal relationship with God? What can be done to build or restore faith in such a one?
2. **2:13.** What are some of the “broken cisterns” that modern people hew for themselves? Why do these things hold no water?

3. **2:19.** How can one's wickedness chasten him? For example, how might the consequences of a sexually depraved life actually benefit the sinner?
4. **2:20.** The saying "I will not serve" is often attributed to Satan. What was the origin of his refusal to serve his Maker? How do those who refuse to acknowledge sin in their own lives imitate him?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **Word Study: Return (3:1).** How often does the Hebrew verb *shûv* appear in the OT? Because it expresses various meanings, including "turn", "turn around", and "turn back", what can the term indicate? As a theological term, how does it speak to Israel's relationship with the Lord? Although Jeremiah makes several appeals for his people to "return" to the Lord in this way, what are Judah and Jerusalem in danger of doing? If they resist the prophet's call, what will God's anger not do?
2. **3:6–11.** To what does the prophet compare the former rebellion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel? Although both kingdoms embraced a culture of sin and so placed themselves under God's judgment, why does Judah bear the greater guilt? Where else in Scripture is the metaphor used of Israel (with its capital, Samaria) and Judah (with its capital, Jerusalem) as wayward sisters?
3. **3:8.** What is a decree of divorce? When would a husband hand this certificate to his wife? Because the tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were sent into exile and never returned home, from whom does it appear that a large part of the covenant people were "divorced"? Why is this not so, however?
4. **3:16.** What was the Ark of the Covenant, and where was it kept? How was the ark lidded, and with what was it topped? According to 2 Mac 2:5–6, what did Jeremiah do with it?

For application

1. **3:7–8.** In what sense does Israel's conduct and refusal to repent constitute scandal toward its sister, Judah? How does the *Catechism* understand the sin of scandal and its gravity (CCC 2284–87)? Has this sin by others ever influenced your behavior? What action or attitude of yours might have been an occasion of scandal to others?
2. **3:10.** Read the note for this verse. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, how often do you confess the same sins over and over again? Even if the sins confessed seem trivial to you, how seriously do you take the resolution to sin no more that you spoke in the Act of Contrition?
3. **3:13.** When you do something you know is wrong toward a loved one, how often do you rationalize or minimize your behavior? Why is it so hard simply to admit the truth without excusing it, acknowledge the wrong, and ask forgiveness?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:10.** When is the word "God" spelled with capital letters? In a moment of distress and grief, of what does the prophet audaciously accuse the Lord? What do many wrongly suppose about Jerusalem and the Temple? What does the Lord also make clear, however?
2. **4:14.** Why does Jeremiah urge Jerusalem to "wash your heart"? Since prophecies of destruction are initially conditional, on what does their fulfillment depend?
3. **4:23.** How is the same Hebrew expression ("waste and void") translated in Gen 1:2? What does this suggest about the land of Judah?
4. **4:27.** Despite mass devastation, from what will God stop short? Why will he preserve a remnant of his people?

For application

1. **4:1.** Why do Christians reevaluating their faith and seeking a fuller experience of God often turn to other religions first? Why is turning to the one true God often the last thing they want to do? What makes yielding at last to him so difficult, and yet so easy?
2. **4:3.** According to Jesus' parable of the Sower, what happens to the seed that is sown among thorns (cf. Lk 8:14)? Why do anxieties and the pleasures of life interfere with the production of spiritual fruit?

3. **4:4.** Because most males are born with a foreskin, what are some of the reasons, both medical and religious, it is removed? As a metaphor, what does its removal mean for the human heart?
4. **4:14.** Read the note for this verse. How aggressively have modern peoples responded to calls for repentance as given, for example, by our Lady at Fatima? Why do we not feel the need to respond? What are the possible consequences for us?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1–3.** What does the Lord challenge Jeremiah to find in Jerusalem, and why? Tragically, what shows that its divine punishment is justly deserved? To what dialogue is this passage similar?
2. **5:12.** To what does the saying that the Lord “will do nothing” amount? Utterly deceived, on what do they insist? What do they proclaim in the midst of violence, and what do they wrongly believe?
3. **5:15.** What is the “nation from afar”? What is the language that Jerusalem does not know? What covenant curses of Deut 28:49–68 is Jeremiah invoking? When did an earlier fulfillment of this curse take place?
4. **5:24.** What is lacking in Judah? During what months do the autumn rains occur? What do they accomplish? During what months do the spring rains occur? What are the weeks appointed for the harvest?

For application

1. **5:3.** Some children do not respond positively to corporal punishment but seem to make “their faces harder than rock”. How does one discipline a child who refuses to change behavior after corporal punishment? How might methods of discipline change as a child grows older?
2. **5:4–5.** Why do we expect virtue and integrity from the educated classes rather than the poor? Why is it not the case that the educated elites are any more virtuous than the uneducated poor and, in fact, may be less virtuous? Of the two classes, which is more often the one that persecutes religious people and institutions?
3. **5:7–8.** When a parent gives a child everything he wants, what is likely to happen as he matures? How is indulging a child any better discipline than inflicting severe corporal punishment on one who seems to dare the parent to force a change?
4. **5:12.** According to the rules of Ignatian discernment, how does the evil spirit operate in the soul of one who is going from bad to worse? When lightning does not strike upon an evil act, what is the sinner most likely to conclude about God’s judgment?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:9.** What are the Babylonians given permission to do? In biblical law, what were farmers instructed to leave after harvesting? How does that restriction apply to Judah?
2. **6:14.** What does the Hebrew word *shālôm* imply? What do the false prophets delude the masses into thinking? What does the quotation appear to have been?
3. **6:16.** What do the ancient paths marked out by the Torah show to God’s people? When does Jesus borrow Jeremiah’s language of “rest for your souls”? With what is his teaching implicitly contrasted?
4. **6:20.** Of what is frankincense a key ingredient? As an ancient trading empire in the southern Arabian Peninsula, what did Sheba export? Of what is sweet cane a key ingredient? Why is God’s rejection of Judah’s sacrifices not a condemnation of sacrifice per se? Rather, when do Israel’s prophets insist that worship becomes displeasing to God? According to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, why did the Lord, before the coming of Christ, reject the sacrifices of the people?

For application

1. **6:1.** According to the note for this verse, where are these cities relative to Jerusalem? As refugees, to where are they to flee? What are some modern refugee centers in the Middle East? From where do these refugees come? For most of them, what is the near-term likelihood of return to their homes?
2. **6:4–5.** Who are the speakers in these verses? What point is the prophet making regarding the welfare of Jerusalem?

3. **6:10.** What pleasure do you derive from the word of the Lord? How open is your ear to hearing it (cf. Ps 40:7–8)? What causes you the most difficulty in taking pleasure or profit from it?
4. **6:15.** When one does wrong, whether deliberately or not, what is the value of shame? How is it possible for one to silence the voice of conscience once and for all?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:4.** What does Jeremiah call “the temple of the LORD”? If Jerusalem’s protection does not lie in the presence of the Lord’s house within its walls, where does it lie? On what is the belief that Zion is “inviolable” probably based? What do the people, and the false prophets who deceived them, forget? What is their only secure object of trust?
2. **7:11.** To what is the Temple compared? What will the Lord’s house, by contrast, not afford? When does Jesus cite these words, and of what does he accuse the merchants?
3. **7:18.** Who was the queen of heaven? How was she served? How do Mesopotamian myths identify her? How was she known in Greek?
4. **7:22.** At the time of the Exodus, according to the Pentateuch, what did God’s original covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai not include? Of what did it initially consist? Laws mandating sacrifice were not given until *after* Israel did what? For Jeremiah, what does a careful reading of this story show? According to St. Jerome, what did the prophet mean that God first gave his people and, after the passage about the calf, later demanded? How does St. Thomas Aquinas explain why God instituted burnt offerings and sacrifices?

For application

1. **7:4.** What confidence for the survival of Christianity do you place in the centuries-long endurance of certain important Christian sites? How would your faith change if the Vatican and all of its buildings were destroyed? Where should trust rather be placed?
2. **7:8–11.** What are some of the ways that people and organizations hide racketeering activities behind Catholic devotion? What are some of the ordinary ways the “average Catholic” hides sinful behavior beneath a veneer of holiness? How is God’s attitude toward these activities different now from what it was in Jeremiah’s time?
3. **7:16.** When is intercessory prayer most likely to be successful? When is it least likely to be successful? If the Lord were to tell you that praying for a particular person is pointless, what would you do?
4. **7:22–23.** Look up Mic 6:6–8. What is the goal of the Christian life? What is the value of personal sacrifices made as part of living according to that goal? What is the value of personal sacrifices if one does not live according to that goal?

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:1.** What kind of act is exhuming and exposing the remains of idolaters? Whose bones do the royal tombs of Jerusalem hold? How extensive is religious corruption in Judean society?
2. **8:2.** What does the host of heaven include? What about them is forbidden in Israel, and how is the prohibition regarded?
3. **8:7.** What do the birds of the air know when to begin, thanks to the instinct given them by God? Of what is Judah, by contrast, less perceptive than non-rational animals?
4. **8:17.** To what are the Babylonian hordes compared? What will Judah be unable to avert? How was snake charming practiced in the ancient Near East?

For application

1. **8:1–2.** Why is grave robbery considered a crime by most societies? Why is mutilating a corpse considered an act of desecration? In Catholic burials, why is it important to place the deceased in blessed ground?
2. **8:4.** How might you cite this verse to encourage someone who has sinned and feels hopeless? What virtue does it encourage?
3. **8:11.** What is the typical penance you are given after making your confession? What is the most severe penance you have ever received? Which was more effective at helping you change your behavior? Why does Jesus mention the prospect of hell as often as he does (e.g., Mt 5:22; Mk 9:43–47; Lk 12:5)?

4. **8:22.** Of what is the balm of Gilead an emblem? How can it soothe the sin-sick soul? Of course, once the balm is applied, what is the responsibility of that soul?

Chapter 9

For understanding

1. **9:3.** How is the tongue like a warrior's bow and arrows? To what does a profusion of slander, deception, and lies in Judah point?
2. **9:17.** In what rituals do women and girls play a leading role? How do they fulfill that role? Why is Jerusalem urged to summon these women?
3. **9:25.** For what purpose was circumcision of the male foreskin widely practiced in the Near East? In OT times, how do the Philistines become one of the few peoples that stand out from their neighbors in that regard? When does male circumcision take place in Israel, and for what purpose?
4. **9:26.** In biblical times, when do Arabs circumcise boys? What kind of rite is shaving hair from the temples among Arabian tribes? How does Judah become no different from neighboring peoples outside the covenant? What premise is unstated? What does cutting away the foreskin of the flesh symbolize? But while efforts at circumcising the heart are needed, what will become clear to Jeremiah? What did Moses foresee that the Lord, by an interior act of grace, would someday do? According to Paul, when does this promised circumcision of the heart take place?

For application

1. **9:4–6.** What is the normal function of language? What is its role in building social cohesion? What happens in society when everyone must be wary of his neighbor and no one trusts the truth of what anyone says?
2. **9:17–18.** What is the purpose of a funeral? What public displays of mourning does our culture employ, and what social functions do they serve? In cases of national mourning, such as at the death of a president, what events may be scheduled to include the largest number of people?
3. **9:23–24.** What is the true mark of success in life, according to Jeremiah? In what does the Lord most delight, even now?
4. **9:25.** What practical difference should reception of the Sacrament of Baptism make in a person's daily life? What is the true mark of failure in the life of a baptized person who rejects or ignores his baptismal commitment?

Chapter 10

For understanding

1. **10:1–5.** Why does the Lord declare that idols and astrological signs pose no threat to his people? To what are images of gods and goddesses compared? What are they unable to do?
2. **10:6.** What does it mean that the God of Israel is incomparable? As addressed to God, what is "your name"? What mystery does this name, which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush, bear, and how must it be treated?
3. **10:17.** Why should the Judeans gather up their bundle? When do deportations from Judah to Babylon take place?
4. **10:23–25.** With what do these verses deal? For what does the petitioner, either Jeremiah or the personified city of Jerusalem, ask? Toward whom is God asked to divert some of his wrath?

For application

1. **10:2.** Why, in a supposedly advanced culture like ours, is astrology still so popular? What influence does one's astrological sign actually bear on one's personality, character, or fate? What, or who, actually directs these things?
2. **10:6.** The note for this verse refers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 206–9, which explain the significance of God's name, "at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name". What does your name reveal about you, and what does it conceal? If your name is something you want treated with respect, how often do you fail to treat the divine name with at least the same reverence?
3. **10:23–24.** What does Jeremiah think of the ability of a person to forge his own destiny? Although human beings have free will, what are its limits? When it comes to a relationship with God, why is it advisable to pray that he provide correction?

Chapter 11

For understanding

1. **11:2.** Whom does the Mosaic covenant bind together? In what stages were the terms of this covenant gradually revealed?
2. **11:14.** Although prophets typically intercede for others (Gen 20:7), for what is Jeremiah forbidden to pray? Whose prayers will the Lord refuse to answer? Of what is the futility of intercession an ominous sign?
3. **11:16.** Of what is the olive tree an image? How does Paul employ the same image of Israel as an olive tree?
4. **11:19.** Of what is Jeremiah both innocent and unaware? How does the imagery resemble Isaiah's Song of the Suffering Servant? How is Jeremiah thus a messiah-like figure? According to St. Justin Martyr, what can be seen from these words?
5. **11:23.** Who will survive when the Babylonians overrun Anathoth? On whose family will this be another act of divine judgment?

For application

1. **11:1–17.** Read the note for these verses. Why during a period of religious revival such as happened during the height of Josiah's reforms would a prophet invoke the curses of the covenant? Why remind people of the sins of the past when things seem to be improving?
2. **11:14–15.** As Jeremiah hints in these verses, what is the prayer that Judah is offering but to which the Lord will refuse to listen? What, rather, is the prayer to which the Lord will always listen, even at the eleventh hour?
3. **11:20.** For the Christian who suffers as a victim, to whom does vengeance rightfully belong (cf. Deut 32:35)? For a God who does not desire the death of the sinner, what vengeance is to him the sweetest?

Chapter 12

For understanding

1. **12:1.** How does the Lord show that he is righteous? Why is the prophet puzzled and irked? Why does the Lord say that the situation is temporary?
2. **12:7.** Whom has the Lord abandoned? When does Jesus allude to this verse? In both cases, to what is the abandonment of God's dwelling a prelude? How is the covenant people described?
3. **12:14–17.** What function do these verses serve? What will happen to the small nations of Moab, Ammon, and Syria? Nevertheless, how will the Lord show them compassion? With what does the language of the passage ("pluck up, build, destroy") have links?

For application

1. **12:1.** How appropriate is it for you to lodge a complaint to the Lord regarding his handling of reality? What examples can you find in Scripture of people making similar complaints? What is the difference between a serious complaint and mere whining? In prayer, how does one resolve a complaint?
2. **12:5.** Read the note for this verse. What are some more contemporary ways of saying the same thing to a person who is ready to give up when things get difficult?
3. **12:6.** What strains or ruptures exist within your family? To what extent are you or your Christian commitment the focus of these difficulties? What steps have you taken to reconcile the family, and with what effect?
4. **12:16–17.** Compare these verses with the commissioning of the apostles in Mk 16:15–16. What either/or choice do both texts hold out? Why is there no middle ground?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:1–11.** When Jeremiah buys a new waistcloth, what does he do with it? What did God command these actions to signify? By serving gods other than the Lord, what had the "evil people" of Judah and Jerusalem become?
2. **13:11.** What does the Hebrew verb *dabaq* mean, and what does it signal? To what is it comparable? According to St. Jerome, whom does the loincloth represent?

3. **13:12–14.** In another symbolic action, what does Jeremiah, standing before a collection of empty wine jugs, declare that God is about to do? What does the large number of vessels to be filled with wine signify? Where might the prophet be standing?
4. **13:18.** Which king is Jeremiah addressing? Who is the queen mother? What royal headpiece did both the king and queen wear?

For application

1. **13:1–7.** How is this symbolic action by Jeremiah like a parable? What is the purpose of parables, such as those that Jesus told? For whose benefit is this parable being enacted?
2. **13:8–11.** Here, the Lord explains the meaning of the parable. What is its main point? How would you rewrite Jeremiah's parable using a more modern image that would apply the same point to today's apostate culture?
3. **13:15–16.** Compare these verses with Is 55:6. When is the most opportune time to seek the Lord? How might the Lord allow the "window of opportunity" for seeking him to close? According to Jeremiah, what attitude causes that window to shut?
4. **13:23.** How do we use the proverb in this verse today? To what situations do we apply it? How similar is the meaning we give this proverb to the way Jeremiah uses it?

Chapter 14

For understanding

1. **14:1–6.** Under what does the whole land of Judah, people and animals, groan? Why are water supplies depleted and the landscape denuded of growth? When did these extreme conditions seem to have come? What is the implied background?
2. **14:7–10.** How does Jeremiah intercede for Judah? What does the use of the first-person plural ("we, us, our") show about his role? What does he not excuse or deny, and what does he affirm? If nothing else, for what motive does the prophet desire God to show mercy?
3. **14:11.** How many times has Jeremiah been forbidden to pray for Judah? Of what is the futility of intercession, as well as the people's fasting and sacrifice, an ominous sign? Now what is the only thing the prophet can do?
4. **14:13–16.** How does Jeremiah, unwilling to give up on intercessory prayer, respond? What is his plea? What is the divine reply?

For application

1. **14:2–3.** On what do we rely for our fresh water supply? In our urban environment, how is our water delivered to us? How would those who live in cities obtain water if their electrical systems failed?
2. **14:4.** Similarly, farmers often rely on irrigation to water their crops. How would our food supply be affected if the rains were to cease and the groundwater aquifers were to become dry?
3. **14:13–16.** Jeremiah blames the prophets for misleading the people into accepting false assurances. When both Church leaders and the faithful accept practices like out of wedlock sexual behavior as normal, who must bear the consequences? What kinds of consequences are likely to result?
4. **14:17.** Read the note for this verse. When Jesus blesses those who mourn (Mt 5:4), to what kind of mourning does he refer? How personally affected should you be by the sins of Christians who accommodate their lives to the prevailing culture rather than to the Lord?

Chapter 15

For understanding

1. **15:2.** What function do pestilence, sword, and famine serve? What is the climactic curse of the Mosaic covenant? Of those who escape the curse of death, how will many of them fare? How badly is captivity feared?
2. **15:13–14.** In his response to Jeremiah, whom does the Lord also address? What is about to happen to Judah's wealth, and what will happen to those who survive sword, famine, and pestilence?
3. **15:16.** What does Jeremiah remember? What idea did God's placement of divine "words" into his "mouth" suggest? To what discovery do some relate this passage? What does the word of the Lord become to those who accept it?

4. **15:19.** What does God's statement ("If you return") imply that Jeremiah, at the end of his rope, has decided? What will the Lord do if Jeremiah accepts again his prophetic task to speak God's word? How will he stand before the Lord?

For application

1. **15:1–4.** In today's Church, popular devotion places much emphasis on the Lord's mercy. Why the stark refusal of mercy in these verses? Given the history of the last hundred years, in which millions of innocent people have been slaughtered, what claim on divine mercy do we have that the Judahites did not?
2. **15:10–11.** If you have ever regretted the day you were born, what brought you to that point? Jeremiah faced real hatred from others for doing what God commissioned him to do; did the opposition you faced come from without or from within, from others or from a psychological issue? Has prayer helped you deal with that regret? If so, in what way?
3. **15:15–18.** If, like Jeremiah, you believe you have done everything properly and still feel abandoned by the Lord, what comfort can you take from the lives of saints who experienced similar abandonment? If, like Jeremiah, you question God's favor (v. 18), how do you restore trust in him?
4. **15:19–21.** In God's promise to restore Jeremiah's vocation, what reassurance does the Lord *not* make? Though his repentance will not necessarily improve his circumstances, what is the implied reward? What should be one's inner motivation for undertaking any ministry despite its continuing hardships?

Chapter 16

For understanding

1. **16:1–9.** What things is Jeremiah forbidden to do? In what way are they prophetic signs of judgment for the people and signs of mercy for the prophet? What will not be possible in the dreadful days ahead?
2. **16:6.** Who will survive or remain in the land to grieve over the dead? Why are gashing or lacerating the skin and shaving one's hair forbidden in Israel? However, what expression of grief is known in Israel?
3. **16:15.** What new formula for swearing oaths will replace the old formula in 16:14? What new and greater exodus does the prophet foresee? After the coming judgment, what does he expect to see? What is the north country?
4. **16:19–21.** With what are these verses concerned? How does the prophet foresee Gentiles coming to faith in the God of Israel?

For application

1. **16:1–4.** Sociologists are alarmed at the falling birthrates in the Western world, in some cases well below replacement level. What circumstances in this environment convince many married couples to avoid having children or choosing at most to bear "one and be done"? Why does the Catholic Church require married couples to remain open to the procreation of human life (CCC 2366–71)?
2. **16:5.** Note the irony in this verse. For whom has the Lord's "steadfast love and mercy" become nothing more than a meaningless expression? For whom should it become a reality?
3. **16:10.** When the present generation deliberately hides any recollection of evils perpetrated by previous generations, what guilt for these evils does it share? How do the sins of the fathers explain the sins of their children?

Chapter 17

For understanding

1. **17:5–8.** What contrast do these verses present? What constitutes the difference between them? Upon what does the passage encourage the remnant of devout Jews to rely?
2. **17:9.** Where are inclinations to sin lodged, and what do they affect? How are they a spiritual pathology? Although we still possess free will (Sir 15:11–20), what does Jeremiah recognize about our hearts? What things does Jesus likewise teach come from our hearts? Since sinful man is a mystery to himself, who can know the depths of his heart?
3. **17:15.** Who is it that asks where is the word of the Lord? Why is Jeremiah beginning to look foolish? What is it that scoffers fail to realize?
4. **17:21.** What is the "sabbath day"? Being one of the Ten Commandments, how serious is its obligation, and of what is it a perpetual sign? Here and elsewhere, how is the Sabbath broken?

For application

1. **17:5.** Why does the man who trusts in man merit a curse? Since trust is necessary for social survival, what is the spiritual problem that Jeremiah sees here?
2. **17:7–8.** How does one exhibit trust in the Lord? According to this analogy, what emotional or spiritual problems does trust in the Lord eliminate? What fruit does trust in the Lord enable one to produce?
3. **17:9.** What does the *Catechism* say about the corruption human beings inherit from Original Sin, and how is it different from both Pelagianism and the teaching of the first Protestant reformers (CCC 404–6)? What effect does Baptism have on the human heart?
4. **17:24–26.** According to Jeremiah, what are the social blessings that follow from keeping the Sabbath day holy? In a culture like ours, what natural blessings would follow from observing a seventh-day rest (CCC 2172)? How does the Christian observance of Sunday fulfill the Jewish Sabbath (CCC 2175–76)?

Chapter 18

For understanding

1. **18:1–12.** In this lesson of the potter at his wheel, what does Jeremiah learn? To whom else does the potter and clay as an image of the Lord’s authority to form his people go back and by whom is it later used? From which picture does it stem?
2. **18:8.** Since the prophecy is conditional, on what does the outcome depend? How does God deal differently with those who repent and those who refuse to cease their wicked ways? If the notion of God “repenting” is not intended literally, on what analogy is it based? What is it a way of saying? Which kind of evil does God intend?
3. **18:18.** Who are the priests, the wise, and the prophets being discussed here? What were each of them supposed to do? What does their expression “strike him with the tongue” suggest they will do, although what else may be part of the plot?
4. **18:23.** If this is not a prayer for the damnation of one’s enemies, for what is Jeremiah praying? Specifically, what does he, who has prayed that fellow Judahites would be spared divine wrath, now pray?

For application

1. **18:1–4.** Some Christian hymns compare God to the potter and the human soul to the clay he shapes. Into what does God wish to shape the human heart? What say does the clay have regarding the shape into which it is being molded?
2. **18:12.** Why do people who leave the faith claim that the Christian way of life is unworkable? What aspects of Christian life do they find most objectionable? Without God, where do their own plans and decisions lead?
3. **18:18.** What kinds of reception do reformers get who challenge the received wisdom or the reigning ideology? When these reformers receive death threats, who takes the threats seriously? Even if the threats are not serious, what is their purpose?
4. **18:23.** If your life were threatened as Jeremiah’s was, what would your prayer with respect to your persecutors be like? What kind of action would you pray God to take in their regard?

Chapter 19

For understanding

1. **19:1–13.** When Jeremiah buys a clay vessel, what does he do with it? Why does God command these prophetic actions? How does Judah, in other words, become no longer the malleable clay it was in 18:4?
2. **19:2.** Where is the valley of the son of Hinnom? Of what is it an image in the NT? Where is the Potsherd Gate, and how is it perhaps otherwise known? For what is it probably used?
3. **19:6.** For what is the cult site called Topheth used? What is the meaning of the name? Why is it called the valley of Slaughter?
4. **19:7–9.** What are the calamities in store for Judah and Jerusalem? What do they include?

For application

1. **19:2.** What does the expression “Location, location, location” mean? To what is it usually applied? If you wanted to televise a warning about, say, political corruption, where would you choose to film it? What does the selection of a location like the valley of Hinnom or Topheth suggest for the type of announcement Jeremiah will make?

2. **19:3–6.** The mention of certain place-names can conjure up images of things associated with them. For example, what images or ideas does the name Auschwitz bring to mind? For what purpose did Jesus use the name Gehenna?
3. **19:12.** If a modern prophet were to warn that a major city like New York City would become like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, what fate for the city would he be suggesting? What would be the reaction of his hearers?
4. **19:14.** In what way is Jeremiah's selection of the Temple more significant for his next announcement than was the valley of Hinnom? If Hinnom signified death and decay, what does the Temple signify? How would that significance lend all the more force to Jeremiah's words?

Chapter 20

For understanding

1. **20:7–13.** What is the subject of these verses? What distinguishes them from previous confessions? What personal cost of his preaching is Jeremiah coming to realize? How does his prayer, which begins in great distress, end?
2. **20:7.** In this daring accusation, what causes Jeremiah in his anguish to feel misled? What is he discovering? What accusation does "you are stronger than I" imply that God has done?
3. **20:9.** Why does Jeremiah attempt to keep silent, and why is his attempt unsuccessful? What is his dilemma? At times, what irresistible urge from within did prophets have? What does this image suggest that his message concerns?
4. **20:14–18.** What is the subject of these verses? Like Job in the midst of his agony, what does Jeremiah curse? Why is cursing one's birthday different from cursing one's parents?

For application

1. **20:7.** To what vocation do you believe the Lord has called you? When you considered the vocation but before you made a decision, what did you know about what it would demand of you? After making your decision, have you entertained any second thoughts about it? How content are you with the decision you made?
2. **20:9.** What temptations to abandon your vocation have you faced? What has kept you faithful to it; or, alternatively, how has your desire to continue in it grown stronger or weaker? Since God does not compel obedience, from where does the compulsion to continue with him come?
3. **20:12.** Why does the Lord try the righteous? What would he learn from such a trial that he does not already know? Why might you, like the Psalmist, wish to invite the Lord to probe your heart and try your thoughts (Ps 139:23–24)?
4. **20:14–18.** What has been the lowest point of your life to date? How close to utter despair did you come? What pulled you through it? If you prayed for relief, how did the Lord provide it?

Chapter 21

For understanding

1. **21:1–10.** What assurance does the king of Judah seek from Jeremiah? What does he actually learn? What are the only options left for the city?
2. **21:5.** By what is the fall of Jerusalem assured? Using expressions familiar from the Exodus story, against whom is the dreadful power of God now turned? When did Moses use the same language as in this verse?
3. **21:8.** How is this verse a parody of the "two ways" of the covenant described by Moses? In Jeremiah's day, since the curse of national conquest is certain, what is the only way to save one's life?
4. **21:14.** To what is "her forest" an allusion?

For application

1. **21:2.** What answer do the emissaries hope to receive from Jeremiah? What would be the conditions under which the answer they want might be granted? What virtually guarantees that the miracle they want will be refused?
2. **21:8–9.** To a dedicated military commander, which of the options Jeremiah presents would be preferable? Even when the situation is hopeless, why would a commander refuse to surrender, assuming his soldiers would be spared if he did? On the other hand, what could the commander expect from his superiors if he chose to surrender?
3. **21:13.** Read the note for this verse. While an accident of geography has so far protected the North American continent from foreign attack, what signs exist that suggest this protection is no longer so sure? Rather than facing attacks from

without, what are the possibilities of attack from within? As ancient prophets would argue, on what must we base our national security?

Chapter 22

For understanding

1. **22:6.** What and where are Gilead and Lebanon? What does the felling and burning of their trees in 22:7 signify? What will the Southern Kingdom of Judah, which endured for more than three centuries, become?
2. **22:13.** What does Jehoiakim, the seventeenth king of Judah, who reigned from 609 to 598 B.C., care little about? Instead, with what is he preoccupied? Of what is his corrupt regime guilty? Which son of Josiah is Jehoiakim? What does the accusation of making his laborers serve him for nothing suggest that Jehoiakim does? According to Catholic tradition, what is one of the sins that cries out to heaven?
3. **22:19.** What happens with the burial of a donkey? What does this poetic imagery signify? Historically, how is Jehoiakim buried?
4. **22:30.** How is Jeconiah/Jehoiachin to be considered childless? Since he already has several sons, what does the prophecy declare? When will another heir from David's royal line assume David's throne? How does Peter see its fulfillment? Where are Jeconiah/Jehoiachin and his sons mentioned outside the Bible? In harmony with 52:34 and 2 Kings 25:30, of what do they speak?

For application

1. **22:4–5.** According to 2 Sam 7:14–15, what does the Lord promise through the prophet Nathan to David's successor? If, according to Jeremiah, the house of David will become a desolation for not heeding the Lord's words, how will Nathan's prophetic promise to it remain in effect?
2. **22:6.** Have you ever had to destroy a possession or abandon a relationship you cherished? If so, what reasoning led you to your decision? What would lead God to destroy what he cherishes?
3. **22:13.** The note for this verse refers to Catholic tradition regarding the withholding of wages. According to the *Catechism*, what is a just wage (CCC 2434)? How do employers and employees arrive at what constitutes a just wage?

Chapter 23

For understanding

1. **23:5.** What days are prophesied as coming? As a wise and upright king from David's line, when will the future Messiah rule over the reunited family of Israel and Judah? According to St. Leo the Great, what was the one remedy that could help prevent the ruin of the human race, and how did the Lord provide it? What two virtues are required by the kings of Israel and Judah as earthly representatives of God and his rule?
2. **Word Study: Branch (23:5).** What various types of vegetative growth does the Hebrew noun *šemaḥ* indicate? Less frequently but more significantly, what sign does the image of a branch represent? In one passage, who is the Lord's branch? In several others, what function does the word serve? Initially, to whom does this "branch" refer? Ultimately, however, for whom is it a title? To what passage in Isaiah is this image of the Messiah as a sprouting "branch" likely indebted?
3. **23:9–40.** Though the prophets of Jeremiah's day present themselves as divine messengers, why are they exposed as false? While they allege having prophetic dreams, from where do their visions come? Worst of all, how do they embolden people to continue in evil?
4. **23:18.** What is the council of the Lord? To what are true prophets like Jeremiah given privileged access? What makes the claims of false prophets to speak for God or his plans for the future fraudulent?

For application

1. **23:3.** Given the ongoing abandonment of Christian faith in today's society, what do people mean who refer to the "remnant"? From where will this "remnant" come? What is the "new evangelization", and what prospects for a return to faith does it hold?

2. **23:6.** Various prayers and litanies approved by the Church contain expressions that affirm God's relationship with us, such as "The Lord our strength", "The Lord our destiny", and so on. How many of them can you think of? As a devotional practice, how useful might it be for you to repeat these during your prayer times?
3. **23:14.** How does religious teaching that is openly false or even subtly misleading strengthen the hands of evildoers? Which strengthens evil-doing more: false doctrine or false moral teaching? Which is easier to correct, and why?
4. **23:28–29.** The charism of prophecy is still active in the Church. According to Heb 4:12: What is the word of the Lord like? What effect should it have on its audience? How does one recognize genuine prophecy in the thoughts or insights of the prophet?

Chapter 24

For understanding

1. **24:1–10.** In this vision of the good and bad figs, who are the good figs, and what will eventually happen to them? Who are the bad figs, and for what are they headed? What misunderstanding among the bad figs does the vision correct? What is the vision's key theological premise?
2. **24:1.** For whom is Nebuchadrezzar an alternative spelling? Who is Jeconiah, and how does his name appear in 22:24? What is this vision? When do figs become ripe?
3. **24:7.** What is one of the great hopes of biblical prophecy? How does Moses describe this? How do Jeremiah and Ezekiel describe it? With whom will the covenant between the Lord and Israel (Lev 26:12) be reaffirmed?

For application

1. **24:1–3.** Certain fruits and the trees from which they come may have cultural or religious significance. For example, what was the cultural significance of a fig tree in ancient Israel? What for us might be the religious significance of an apple?
2. **24:4–7.** How can tragedy or great suffering such as a devastating loss or disease work to purify the human heart over time? What beneficial effect has suffering had on your spiritual life?
3. **24:8–10.** If tragedy or great suffering has never been part of your life, how might its absence be a curse instead of a blessing? While you may not wish to pray for the experience of suffering, how can you prepare yourself for it when it comes?

Chapter 25

For understanding

1. **25:9.** What does it mean to say that Nebuchadrezzar is the Lord's servant? What is the Lord, who steers the course of world history, able to direct? How will God similarly raise up Cyrus II of Persia as his anointed servant?
2. **25:11.** To what does the period of seventy years refer, and what will happen at its end? When did this period begin, and how long did it actually last? What does seventy years also represent, and so what is part of the message?
3. **25:15.** Of what is the cup of the wine of wrath an image? Which nations are included among those set to imbibe God's wrath?
4. **25:26.** For what nation is the Hebrew word *shēshakh* a cipher? How is it created?

For application

1. **25:3.** How frustrating would it be to engage in a work to which you were convinced God called you, only to sense that your efforts had been fruitless? What considerations would influence your decision to continue or not?
2. **25:4.** What does it mean to "incline your ear" to hear? How does one incline his ear to hear the Lord? Since Judah has not inclined its ear to hear the Lord, what in effect is that society doing?
3. **25:11.** Read the note for this verse. What is the similarity between the fate of those who will return to Judah at the end of the seventy years and that of the Israelite generation who will first enter the Promised Land under Joshua? Why would it have been necessary in both cases for the earlier generation to die out?
4. **25:29.** Why is it appropriate that the judgment of the world should begin with the household of God (1 Pet 4:17)?

Chapter 26

For understanding

1. **26:1–24.** When is Jeremiah's Temple sermon delivered? Although a fuller account of this sermon appears in 7:1—8:3, on what is attention focused here? In this instance, for what do the religious leaders of Judah clamor, and what do the royal leaders of Judah do? What is Jeremiah's alleged blasphemy? What other prophets utter the same warning?
2. **26:8.** How are Jeremiah's words perceived, and with what is that linked?
3. **26:16.** In whom is the first criterion of a true prophet met? Although false prophets of the day sometimes speak in the name of the Lord, in what other god's name do they speak?
4. **26:18.** When and where does Micah of Moresheth, as one of the Minor Prophets whose oracles are preserved in the Bible, prophesy? What do the court elders argue about sparing Jeremiah's life and heeding his call to repentance? When does Hezekiah reign? What does the citation from Mic 3:12 foretell?

For application

1. **26:12–15.** When Jesus faced a hostile audience, how did he typically comport himself? For example, how did he respond when besieged with questions designed to entrap him (e.g., Mt 22:15ff.; Jn 8:3–11)? When threatened by crowds ready to stone him, what did he do (Jn 10:31–39)? When is the only time he allowed himself to be arrested?
2. **26:16.** When a person exercising a genuine charism of prophecy gives a message in the name of the Lord, what responsibility is he taking upon himself? If he feels the urge to prophesy but is not sure of the message, what should he do? If the prophet deliberately invokes the name of the Lord while knowing that the message is his own invention, what commandment is he violating?
3. **26:20–23.** What did Jesus warn his disciples would happen to those who preach his name (Mt 10:17–23)? What did he say the persecuted should do? What will be the reward of those who endure to the end?

Chapter 27

For understanding

1. **27:1–22.** What message does Jeremiah deliver that Judah and its neighbors must do or face what consequence? Because God gave Nebuchadnezzar the authority to rule these small states for a time, to what does any attempt at rebellion against Babylon amount? What sharp contrast does the episode also draw?
2. **27:2.** What are thongs and yoke-bars? Why does Jeremiah carry such a yoke, and what does it represent?
3. **27:16.** To which vessels does this verse refer? What do false prophets claim about these spoils? How does the opposite prove true? When will they be returned to the Temple?
4. **27:19.** What were these pillars, and where did they stand? What was the sea, and where was it located? What were the stands?

For application

1. **27:8–11.** The note for v. 3 says that these words were addressed to foreign nations through their delegates in Jerusalem. What attention do you think they would pay to a message from the Israelite God? Aside from that, how politically realistic would Jeremiah's message have seemed to them? What would a modern politician say of such a message?
2. **27:12–15.** Recall that Zedekiah was installed as king by Nebuchadnezzar after he deported Jechoiachin and three thousand Judahites to Babylon. Whose subject, therefore, is Zedekiah? On what basis should Zedekiah know that Jeremiah's allegation regarding the court prophets is true? In effect, whom is Jeremiah demanding that the king should trust without corroborating evidence?
3. **27:18.** Read the note for this verse. How would the populace know that the prophets' intercession had succeeded? What, however, does Jeremiah expect will actually happen?

Chapter 28

For understanding

1. **28:1.** What is "that same year"? Who is Hananiah? With what promise is he deceiving the people? How does Jeremiah view all of this? Where is Gibeon?

2. **28:6.** What does the Hebrew acclamation “Amen!” mean? Why is Jeremiah speaking sarcastically?
3. **28:9.** What is the keynote theme of the false prophets in Jeremiah’s day? What is one of the tests of a true prophet set forth in Deuteronomy? How is this test applied to the two prophets who square off in this episode?
4. **28:10.** What does Hananiah attempt to do by breaking the yoke-bars that Jeremiah has been carrying? How does the gesture make the outcome more bleak?

For application

1. **28:1–4.** What is Jeremiah wearing that prompts Hananiah’s response (27:2)? Against whom is the response publicly directed? What is Hananiah’s motive?
2. **28:7–8.** To what authorities does Jeremiah appeal in his reply to Hananiah, and what is the content of their prophecies? What are some modern examples of prophets who made specific predictions that have not come to pass?
3. **28:15–17.** According to Deut 18:20, what is the penalty for a prophet who prophesies falsely? Why was the penalty for false prophecy so drastic? In today’s world, what would spiritual leaders think a penalty for false prophecy should be?

Chapter 29

For understanding

1. **29:1–32.** To whom is Jeremiah’s letter addressed? What reassurance does he give them? For the time being, what should they be prepared to do? But after the “seventy years” of subjection to Babylon are complete, what will God do? Thus, what are his plans for them? What is the only thing the community still living in Judah can expect?
2. **29:8.** Who are “your prophets”? Who are the diviners? What did these deceivers create? How does Jeremiah counter this?
3. **29:21.** Who are the Ahab and Zedekiah mentioned here? Why does the Lord pronounce judgment on them?
4. **29:22.** What is wished upon others as a curse? Most likely, what was the outcome of Ahab’s and Zedekiah’s message that Judah’s exile was about to end?

For application

1. **29:4–6.** How might Middle Eastern Christian refugees who were forced by war or persecution to flee to other countries apply these verses to themselves? What are the implications for the future in these verses?
2. **29:7.** In what ways should the Christian people concern themselves about the welfare of the nation in which they abide? As a Catholic, what concerns do you have for political developments in our country, and what can you do about them? Do you pray for the welfare of the nation (cf. CCC 1900)?
3. **29:11.** In the original context, what were the Lord’s plans for the exiles? As applied to the current situation of the Church in the world, what future might the Lord have in mind? How would you apply this verse to yourself personally?
4. **29:13–14.** What is the key to finding the Lord whom you seek? Why is a half-hearted effort ineffective?

Chapter 30

For understanding

1. **30:3.** How does Jeremiah’s vision expand, and whom does it include? For whom is the Lord’s promise of restoration thus intended?
2. **30:11.** What made expulsion from the Promised Land and dispersion among the nations necessary? What does the limit to God’s judgment mean?
3. **30:19.** What does the Hebrew word *tôdôh* indicate here? How was thanksgiving for salvation also ritualized?
4. **30:22.** What does the promise “you shall be my people, and I will be your God” reaffirm? How do scholars designate such statements of mutual belonging? How many times is it found in Jeremiah’s “Book of Consolation”?

For application

1. **30:2.** Why do people write books? Why might the Lord wish his words to be written down? If the Holy Spirit were to grant you a prophecy or a vision, what would you do with it?
2. **30:8.** Compare this verse with Jeremiah’s condemnation of Hananiah’s prophecy (28:2–4, 10–11). Against whose yoke did Hananiah prophesy? Whose yoke is Jeremiah saying the Lord will break? Why is Jeremiah not contradicting himself?

3. **30:11.** When a parent forgives a child for some wrong, why must punishment still follow? What is the punishment intended to accomplish?
4. **30:21.** How does this verse apply to Jesus? How has he drawn near to the Lord? On whose initiative do you draw near to the Lord?

Chapter 31

For understanding

1. **31:3.** What is God's "everlasting love"? Though this love may be expressed at times as discipline, what does it ensure? Of what has divine love been the foundation? To what does the Hebrew word *hesed* refer?
2. **31:15.** What cries echo in Ramah? According to one tradition, whose burial site was in this town? In Jeremiah's time, for what is Ramah a staging point? For what is Rachel said to mourn, but what does the Lord assure her will happen in the future? According to Mt 2:18, when does this passage also find fulfillment? In this instance, how are Rachel's children (= baby Israelites) taken from the land of Israel?
3. **31:31–34.** What are four distinctive features of the "new covenant" Jeremiah prophesies that are unlike the Mosaic covenant? When does Jesus ratify Jeremiah's new covenant? How does Paul see himself as a minister of this new covenant? According to the Book of Hebrews, what does the sacrifice of Jesus accomplish? According to St. Justin Martyr, what is the effect of the New Covenant on the Old, and how long will the New last? According to St. Augustine, what is promised in the New Covenant?
4. **31:34.** To what does "knowing the Lord" refer, and on what is it based in part? According to St. Bede, when—and why—will we no longer need the Scriptures or people to interpret them? To what is "remembering sin" a reference?

For application

1. **31:3.** This verse is intended for the consolation of Israel as a people. How has it consoled you as an individual? How might you use it to help someone who feels abandoned by God?
2. **31:9.** In this verse, how does the Lord show his fatherhood for the returning exiles? In the parable of the Prodigal Son, how does the father demonstrate paternal love for each of the two sons (Lk 15:11–32)?
3. **31:18–19.** According to Prov 13:24, how does the father regard his child when he refuses to discipline him? What is the relationship between parental love and parental discipline? What are some behavioral indications that a child actually wants discipline?
4. **31:33.** At what point in one's life does the Law of God pass from being a law written on stone to a law written in the heart? How does one's life change when that transition occurs?

Chapter 32

For understanding

1. **32:7.** Who is Shallum? What is Anathoth? In ancient Israel, why were efforts made to keep family lands within family lines? In times of financial hardship, when land had to be sold, to whom was it first offered? When would land purchased by someone outside the kinship group revert to the original family owners?
2. **32:10.** How was the original deed of sale processed? Where were duplicate copies of the deed stored? What was the function of witnesses?
3. **32:25.** About what does the prophet have second thoughts? What reassurance does he seek from the Lord?
4. **32:34.** To what abominations does Jeremiah refer? In the late monarchical period, how was the Lord's sanctuary defiled?

For application

1. **32:9–15.** If you have ever closed on the purchase of a house or other property, what closing procedures are involved that are similar to those narrated here? For example, why are the services of a notary public required? What happens to the documents? How does Jeremiah signal that this purchase is a prophetic action?
2. **32:25.** What question, in effect, is Jeremiah asking? Have you ever felt led, either by the Lord or by your own judgment, to do something that was counterintuitive and possibly pointless? What was your reasoning? What was the outcome?

3. **32:36–44.** What was the Lord’s answer? In recent times, although Middle Eastern Christians have been driven from their homes by religious extremists and not by any infidelity on their part, what are the prospects for their return?
4. **32:39.** How is fear of the Lord good for the people and for their children? What does it mean for the people to have one heart?

Chapter 33

For understanding

1. **33:3.** The personal pronoun (“you”) is singular in both cases, indicating that God is addressing whom? What are the “hidden things”?
2. **33:11.** When will the joyous sounds of wedding celebrations be heard again in Judah? What thank offerings will be offered in the Temple? According to later rabbinic tradition, all sacrifices will cease in the age to come except which one?
3. **33:17–18.** What covenants does God pledge to uphold? In the Davidic covenant, what did the Lord swear to do? In the Levitical covenant, to what did he admit Aaron and his descendants? In view of what are these pledges renewed?
4. **33:20.** What is the Lord’s covenant with the day and the night? If people cannot break this covenant, what does that say for God’s covenants with David and the Levitical priests?

For application

1. **33:3.** When you call to the Lord as he is inviting you to do, what do you expect of him in reply? What are some of the hidden things about yourself or your environment that you wish him to tell you?
2. **33:8.** Although God’s forgiveness is freely offered here, what do Israel and Judah need to do to obtain it? According to Ps 51, what does the Psalmist desire of the Lord besides forgiveness? What kind of sacrifice is he willing to offer to obtain it?
3. **33:11.** Read the note for this verse. Among Christians with valid liturgies, which type of sacrifice is still being offered? Why are other types of sacrifice no longer required?
4. **33:25–26.** What is the Lord claiming here? Since the Lord cannot forget even the smallest part of his creation, what is the likelihood that he would forget you? When you repent and are forgiven of sin, what does restoration mean for you?

Chapter 34

For understanding

1. **34:8.** To what is Zedekiah’s proclamation of liberty similar? What covenant is made here? What is probably the two-fold reason for this decision? In any case, what does the manumission of enslaved kinsmen amount to in the Lord’s eyes?
2. **34:11.** When did violation of the covenant just made take place? What must many have thought of the threat against Jerusalem?
3. **34:17.** Because slave owners reneged on their oath to “release” their slaves permanently, into what are they now “released”? What do the curses of the Mosaic covenant bring to those who violate it?
4. **34:18.** In an ancient covenant-making procedure, what did partners entering a covenant do with the severed parts of animals? What were these actions equivalent to saying? For a biblical example, in Gen 15:7–21, what is the Lord promising when he passes between divided animals? Where is the same practice attested outside the Bible?

For application

1. **34:5.** The note for this verse mentions that Zedekiah’s life will be spared, but not suffering. Why does the Lord not spare you suffering? What purposes can suffering serve if you are willing to accept it? How can suffering be transcended?
2. **34:8–11.** In confession, you promise to renounce the sin you just confessed and promise to avoid that sin in the future. How often have you reneged on promises such as that? What have been some of the spiritual consequences of committing that sin again, and possibly repeatedly? If you have no firm intention of avoiding that sin, what does that say for the validity of your confession? If you deliberately make an invalid confession, what additional sin do you commit?

3. **34:18.** The ceremony alluded to here dramatizes the consequences of the failure to keep the covenant. In a culture like ours, how do we ceremonially dramatize what happens if we fail to keep the vows we make? If we have no such ceremony, on what do we rely for assurance that we will keep our vows?

Chapter 35

For understanding

1. **35:1–19.** How do these verses contrast the Rechabites with other Judahites? What does the account stress?
2. **35:2.** Who are the Rechabites? How does the clan stand out from the general population of Judah? How do they live? What is the only reason they seek refuge within the walls of Jerusalem? What do some scholars hypothesize about them? Although the Lord does not endorse their rule of life as such, for what does he bless them? What are the chambers mentioned here?
3. **35:4.** For whom is the title “man of God” normally used? Who is Maaseiah? What is the keeper of the threshold?
4. **35:19.** What blessing does the Lord give Jonadab? What does at least one of the sons of Rechab do for Jerusalem, and when? What does the promise of standing before the Lord suggest that the Rechabites are granted?

For application

1. **35:4.** Some monasteries have a position called a porter; Bl. Solanus Casey was given this function. Why would a porter be necessary? What would a porter do? In Ps 84:10, why would the Psalmist wish to be a porter in the house of God? How might his wish possibly reflect your own?
2. **35:6–10.** What, if any, religious purpose lies behind the Rechabites’ pattern of life? Why would a modern family establish a pattern of life based on kinds of food to be eaten or avoided (such as a vegan diet) or an alternative life-style (such as subsistence farming)? If not chosen for religious reasons, what would be the benefits of such a way of life?
3. **35:14.** How do modern secular principles for living a healthy and productive life compare with the Rechabites’ determination to obey their father’s command? Why do these same principles often serve as an alternative to Judeo-Christian moral principles? What would Jeremiah say about this alternative?
4. **35:18–19.** Why is it important to keep vows that you make, even when they are not religious? How does the effort to build a good character even in non-religious matters help with spiritual growth?

Chapter 36

For understanding

1. **36:2.** How did scribes normally write text on long parchment or papyrus scrolls? What words is Jeremiah to dictate? In what year was Jeremiah called to be a prophet? What does the scroll thus contain?
2. **36:4.** Who is Baruch, son of Neriah? What do his services include? How does he also act as a spokesman for the prophet? What will Baruch’s brother, Seraiah, become? What did archaeologists digging in Jerusalem unearth about Baruch? After the fall of Jerusalem, where does Baruch go?
3. **36:24.** What sign of defiant resistance to the word of the Lord and its appeals for repentance do the king and his servants make? How does it place the evil Jehoiakim in contrast to righteous kings such as his father, Josiah?
4. **36:30.** What is Jehoiakim denied? How long does his successor, Jehoiachin, reign? What does it mean for Jehoiakim to be “cast out”? Why does this appear to be a figurative description of the king’s dishonorable end?

For application

1. **36:3.** Isaiah urges his audience to “seek the LORD while he may be found” (Is 55:6). When does a time come when the Lord may not be found? According to the note for this verse, what window of opportunity is about to close? What window of opportunity is open to those who seek the Lord today, and under what conditions might it close?
2. **36:5.** St. Stephen was arrested and tried for preaching against the Temple. Why was such preaching regarded as criminal? What might people of Jeremiah’s time have thought would happen to the faith of Israel if the center of its worship were destroyed? Now that the Temple has been destroyed and not rebuilt, how has Judaism adapted? Among Christians, what is the new center of worship?

3. **36:16–19.** Why would the princes regard Jeremiah's message as seditious? In addition to predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, against whom by extension are the prophecies on the scroll directed?
4. **36:23–24.** In an age when copying was slow, laborious, and time-consuming, what might the king have supposed destroying the original of a document would accomplish? In the modern age, how might a document critical of the government be circulated even if the original was destroyed? In the age of the Internet, how likely is it that the written word of God would ever be eradicated?

Chapter 37

For understanding

1. **37:3.** How successful is the king's attempt to win God's favor and escape the consequences of his folly? What does he do that is contrary to the counsel of Jeremiah?
2. **37:9.** What do some delude themselves into thinking about the Babylonian threat? In fact, what will Nebuchadnezzar's forces quickly do?
3. **37:19.** To which prophets is Jeremiah referring? What does Jeremiah wonder?
4. **37:21.** In an act of clemency, where does Zedekiah place Jeremiah? What sort of confinement is it more like? How long will the prophet remain there?

For application

1. **37:3.** If someone asked you to pray for the success of a project you were convinced was not of the Lord, what would you do? How would you explain your refusal to pray for the project? If you agreed to pray, what form would your prayer take?
2. **37:13–15.** In this country, what recourse do citizens have who have been arrested and jailed over a false charge? On whom lies the burden of proof if the case comes to trial? If the charge is proven false or the case is dismissed, what recompense has the citizen for the time spent in jail and the damage to his reputation?
3. **37:17.** If you have ever been the possessor of bad news for an authority who hoped to hear the opposite, what courage did you need to communicate it? What reaction were you most afraid of receiving? How did you communicate the message: by giving the straight, unvarnished version or by sugarcoating it as much as possible?
4. **37:21.** Since Zedekiah apparently has some respect for Jeremiah as a prophet (v. 17), why does the king not release him? What would have been the point of keeping him in prison indefinitely?

Chapter 38

For understanding

1. **38:1–13.** How is Jeremiah accused of aiding the enemy? What penalty does the charge of treason merit? However, since the prophet is not betraying his people, what is he advising them to do? Where do four accusers (38:1), often identified as pro-Egyptian politicians, cast Jeremiah, and what does a sympathizer named Ebed-melech do?
2. **38:6.** What is a cistern? Since this one is nearly dry, except for some sediment at the bottom, what does that suggest about when this incident took place?
3. **38:7.** How does the name Ebed-melech translate? Why will his life be spared during the conquest of Jerusalem? What is a eunuch?
4. **38:14–28.** About what does Zedekiah question Jeremiah? Although he answers, why does he hesitate to speak? With what two options does he present the king?

For application

1. **38:4.** What merit is there in the princes' accusation against Jeremiah? The note for this verse says that the princes have reversed their position regarding him. What do you think may have caused their change of opinion? What would happen nowadays to someone accused of publicly advocating surrender to the enemy?
2. **38:6.** Since the princes have the king's permission, why place Jeremiah in a cistern rather than execute him outright? What do they hope will happen to him?

3. **38:17–19.** Have you ever been confronted with a choice of two options, neither of which promises a good outcome (e.g., to quit your job or be fired from it)? If so, what considerations led you to decide one choice might be better than the other? What fears did you face about making any choice?
4. **38:24–27.** The note for v. 26 says that Jeremiah’s reply to the princes is “true, as far as it goes”; however, it is not the whole truth, as the princes demanded. What moral dilemma does Jeremiah face regarding the truth? What does the *Catechism* say about when it is appropriate to reveal the whole truth to someone who asks for it (CCC 2488–89)?

Chapter 39

For understanding

1. **39:1.** What year is the king’s ninth year? Since his tenth year begins in March-April, how many months does the long siege of Jerusalem, which begins in January 587 and ends with the burning of the city in August 586, cover? What is the tenth month?
2. **39:2.** What year is Zedekiah’s eleventh year, and what is its fourth month? Which of Jerusalem’s defensive walls do Nebuchadnezzar’s forces probably break through, and why was it vulnerable? How long afterward are the city and Temple burned?
3. **39:9.** Who is Nebuzaradan? What does he oversee? What is he also tasked with organizing?
4. **39:14.** Of what is Gedaliah made governor? When is he appointed by Nebuchadnezzar? What roles did his father, Ahikam, and grandfather Shaphan have? With whom is he not to be confused?

For application

1. **39:4.** What is the “fight or flight” response to a perceived danger? Under the circumstances, what would have been the “fight” alternative if Zedekiah had chosen not to flee? Have you ever faced situations where such an alternative presented itself? Which did you take? Which, upon reflection, should you have taken?
2. **39:7.** What is spiritual blindness? How might you work to discover areas of sin to which you have been spiritually blind? To what extent may we be culpable for our own areas of spiritual blindness (cf. Jn 9:40–41)?
3. **39:10.** According to the *Catechism*, to whom do the goods of the earth and its resources belong? When is government appropriation of property legitimate (CCC 2402, 2406)? What does the Church teach about the ownership of private property as it relates to the universal destination of goods (CCC 2403)?

Chapter 40

For understanding

1. **40:1–6.** From what group is Jeremiah released? Though he had already been given his freedom by Nebuchadnezzar (39:11–12), apparently what happened? Upon release, what choice is he given, and what choice does he make?
2. **40:3.** Whose preaching did the remarkable confession of the Gentile soldier echo, and what did he say? Because the pronoun “you” is plural, to what does it refer?
3. **40:6.** What function did Mizpah, a town of Benjamin seven miles north of Jerusalem, serve? How does the name translate? Where does Jeremiah dwell?
4. **40:8.** Who is Ishmael? By whom was he hired to murder Gedaliah? What does one suspect the Ammonites are looking for ways to accomplish? How does Gedaliah make himself a target? When Johanan, the Judahite captain, informs Gedaliah of the assassination plot against his life, what happens? To whom does the term ‘Maacathite’ refer?

For application

1. **40:4–6.** Nebuzaradan gives Jeremiah four options on where to go upon release. Given Jeremiah’s prophecies about the blessings the Lord would bring to the exiles in Babylon and curses on those who remained (cf. Jer 24), why would he decide to stay in Judah?
2. **40:6.** Read the note for this verse. For what else is Mizpah known (cf. Judg 11:11; 20–21; 1 Sam 7:6, 16; 1 Mac 3:46)?
3. **40:9–12.** The note for v. 8 says that Gedaliah makes himself a target by encouraging submission to Babylon. How is Gedaliah’s a no-win situation for himself? After conquering Judah, why would Nebuchadnezzar appoint a Jew rather than a Babylonian official to govern Judah? Despite the abundance of the summer harvest, what would have been the sentiment of those remaining in Judah regarding submission to Babylon?

4. **40:14–16.** How would Johanan have known of the plot against Gedaliah's life (cf. v. 14)? If you were warned that someone was out to kill you, even if you did not believe the threat, how would you change your behavior? In effect, what does Gedaliah do to protect himself?

Chapter 41

For understanding

1. **41:1–18.** What does Ishmael, a commander of Jewish forces, do? When he is overtaken by Johanan, another army commander, what happens? Where does Ishmael, who escapes, seek refuge?
2. **41:5.** Where are Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria? To what group do the mourners belong? How is incense used in sacrifice? Since the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by fire two months prior to this (52:12–13), what does bringing sacrificial gifts after this disaster seem to imply? What feast are the mourners probably attending as pilgrims?
3. **41:12.** What is the great pool? How large is it, and how is it known? Where is Gibeon relative to Mizpah?
4. **41:18.** What does Johanan fear that Judah will face? How would Gedaliah's killing be viewed by Nebuchadnezzar?

For application

1. **41:1–3.** What might be Ishmael's rationale for bringing with him such a small company of armed men? Why conduct the assassination of Gedaliah and his Jewish attendants during a banquet (a common approach in such episodes in Scripture)?
2. **41:11–15.** Read the note for v. 12. What may have been the cause of Ishmael's slow progress in his escape? Why does Ishmael appear not to have put up a fight against Johanan and his force?
3. **41:16–18.** Read the note for v. 18. Why would Johanan with his soldiers take the captives from Mizpah to Egypt—a large retinue for a small military force—rather than returning them to Mizpah?

Chapter 42

For understanding

1. **42:5.** When an oath of unconditional obedience is broken, what will it bring upon the remnant? What do oaths that invoke the Lord as a witness call upon him to be?
2. **42:9–18.** With what two options is the remnant presented? According to the prophet's blunt summary of the Lord's message, if the remnant adopts the second option, what will God do?
3. **42:10.** What does the Lord promise to do for the remnant if they stay in the Promised Land? What is the Lord's "I repent" a metaphorical way of saying?
4. **42:11.** What is the remnant's concern about how Nebuchadnezzar, who appointed Gedaliah the governor (40:5), will respond to his assassination? Because the king of Babylon is the Lord's "servant", what can he be influenced to show Judah? What is the point of giving the same promise of divine protection that was made to Jeremiah?

For application

1. **42:4.** How eager to intercede for the refugees does Jeremiah appear to be? Why does he insist that he will tell them everything the Lord says, with nothing held back?
2. **42:5–6.** According to the *Catechism*, when may one take an oath (CCC 2151)? Why must the reason for swearing an oath be serious? What is the moral problem with swearing a false oath?
3. **42:10–12.** Given the retribution the refugees feared, what is the Lord asking them to do by promising safety if they stay in Judah? Have you ever faced the challenge of trusting the Lord to care for you although the prospects looked bleak? In any form of prayer, why does the Lord expect trust from petitioners?
4. **42:19–22.** What reply is Jeremiah expecting to receive from the leaders of the refugees? How does his experience validate his concern? How confident does he appear to be that his prophecy is truly the Lord's word?

Chapter 43

For understanding

1. **43:1–7.** Of what is Jeremiah accused? Where are both the prophet and his scribe taken? To what does the flight to Egypt amount?

2. **43:6.** To what does the text give no indication regarding Jeremiah and Baruch? Why does coercion seem more likely than not?
3. **43:8–13.** How does Jeremiah announce judgment on Egypt? What will follow the disobedient remnant of Judah to their new home?
4. **43:11.** When does the Babylonian army invade Egypt? According to the Jewish historian Josephus, when Nebuchadnezzar's forces conquer Egypt, what do they do? How does this explain what happens with Baruch?

For application

1. **43:2–3.** When you pray to the Lord for direction, what should be your attitude toward the outcome? If your prayer assumes that God will bless an outcome decided upon in advance, what answer are you likely to receive?
2. **43:4–7.** The *Catechism* says that “we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when *we cooperate in them*” (CCC 1868; emphasis in original). Although the refugees in these verses go to Egypt with Johanan and the military commanders, what is most likely their level of willingness to cooperate in the migration? What level of guilt can be imputed to those who go unwillingly, such as Jeremiah (cf. CCC 1736–37)?
3. **43:8–10.** Guilt tends to follow one who tries to evade it. What are some common ways that people try to assuage their guilt? What are some indications in people's behavior that the effort is futile? In effect, what is Jeremiah telling his audience?

Chapter 44

For understanding

1. **44:1–30.** What do these verses document? To what does this community of survivors, instead of learning from the mistakes of the past and making a humble return to the Lord, revert? What disastrous outcome does their defiance guarantee? Theologically, how do the apostate Jews in Egypt repudiate the blessings of the Exodus?
2. **44:17.** Who is the queen of heaven? How was she served? How do Mesopotamian myths identify Ishtar, and what was she known as in Greek? For what do men suppose that Ishtar was responsible? As evidence of their spiritual blindness, they misinterpret the causes of recent history; in reality, how do they see the situation?
3. **44:26–30.** In this divine oath of disinheritance, what does God swear by his own life will happen? How does this recall the divine oath in Num 14:28–35?
4. **44:30.** Who was Hophra, and what happened to him? Of what is this event to be a “sign” to the Jews in Egypt? How does the Greek historian Herodotus refer to Pharaoh Hophra?

For application

1. **44:3.** What does the Lord mean by saying that the people of Jerusalem served “other gods that they knew not”? What does it mean to “know” God? From where would this knowledge have come?
2. **44:9.** What is the hardest lesson you have had to learn about yourself? What event or series of events forced this lesson upon you? Since then, has that lesson needed to be repeated, at least in your memory if not in fact?
3. **44:10.** Psalm 119 is a long meditation on the Psalmist's desire for formation in the Law and its statutes. What is it about them that so repels the wicked and so attracts the Psalmist? How do you relate to what the Psalmist sees in the Law?
4. **44:25.** Why has modern culture taken such pride in “doing it my way”? From the Christian point of view, what is the spiritual folly of doing things our own way?

Chapter 45

For understanding

1. **45:3.** What are the only words of Baruch preserved in the book? What does he lament, and what does he seem to wonder about? In fact, what makes him a target of persecution? What is the reward for his loyalty?
2. **45:4.** When and how will the Lord destroy his own work?

For application

1. **45:3.** What is your favorite complaint about the difficulties of your life? How often do you voice it, and how is the complaint received? If it is justified, what are you doing to resolve the issue?

2. **45:5.** When Jesus assures his disciples that not a hair of their heads will be destroyed during persecution, what does he actually promise them (Lk 21:16–19)? What does it mean that their loyalty to Jesus will secure their lives, since most of them are martyred?

Chapter 46

For understanding

1. **46:2.** Why did Pharaoh Neco II, king of Egypt, march north through the land of Israel to join forces with Assyria? Where is Carchemish? What happened at the Battle of Carchemish? What was the result of Egypt's humiliating defeat, followed by its immediate withdrawal from Palestine?
2. **46:8.** How is the yearly inundation of the Nile, in which the river overflows its banks and floods the adjacent plains, here a poetical image of Egypt? What else is assumed, however, about the Nile?
3. **46:15.** Where does the name Apis appear? What word does the Hebrew have? What is Apis and how is it represented? Whom is it believed to embody? Despite its appearance of strength, what does it do?
4. **46:23.** What does felling trees signify? How are ravenous locusts that swarm in large numbers comparable to armies?

For application

1. **46:5–6.** For a military commander, what happens among his troops when a rout occurs? How hard is it to regain control over the troops? When an army in a foreign land suffers a rout in battle, what mercy are its fleeing troops likely to expect?
2. **46:11–12.** What happens to the morale of a superpower after its armies have suffered a major defeat? What opinion will other nations, both friendly and hostile, have of the same superpower afterward?
3. **46:14–17.** Hophra was Pharaoh when the Egyptian army marched to relieve the siege of Jerusalem but retreated before the Babylonian army. According to the note for v. 15, what can the Jews living in these cities expect from weakened Egyptian power? If you were to give a nickname to a braggart who threatened a fight and then shied away from it, what nickname might you propose?
4. **46:28.** When a parent forgives a child for some wrong, why must punishment still follow? What is the punishment intended to accomplish?

Chapter 47

For understanding

1. **47:1.** Who are the Philistines? When did they establish themselves in southwest Canaan, and what coalition of cities did they occupy? According to Herodotus, the Greek historian, what city did Neco II conquer, and when?
2. **47:2–7.** Whose humiliation did this prophetic taunt foretell?
3. **47:2.** How is the Babylonian invasion of Philistine territory pictured? Of whom are similar prophetic warnings made?
4. **47:4.** Where are the seaport cities of Tyre and Sidon? Although they are allies of the Philistines in opposing Babylonian sovereignty in Syria-Palestine, what are they powerless to do? What is Caphtor?

For application

1. **47:3.** Think of a time when you experienced panic over your physical safety. On what did you focus? If you were in a group at the time, how much of your attention was on protecting them? Did the feeling of panic obstruct all thought? After the experience passed, how did you evaluate your conduct during it?
2. **47:6.** Although in Jeremiah the sword of the Lord may be understood somewhat literally as the sword of the Babylonians, in New Testament terms what is the sword of the Lord? According to Heb 4:12, what does it do? How has it operated in your life?

Chapter 48

For understanding

1. **48:1.** Where is Moab? Faulting the Moabites for pride, what does the prophet foretell about them and their chief deity, Chemosh? To whom does Genesis trace the origin of the Moabites? What happened to Nebo and Kiriathaim, Israelite towns east of the Jordan River?

2. **48:12.** For what are Moabites, known for their winemaking, headed? How does Jeremiah picture this? What does the disappearance of wine also signal?
3. **48:26.** What will make Moab drunk? What is Moab's besetting sin? Historically, how did the Moabites treat the people of Judah?
4. **48:45–46.** Of what song are these verses a reworking? What did it originally recall? To what are its lyrics applied here?

For application

1. **48:10.** This verse seems to be an aside. To whom is it directed? How can the first half of this verse be applied to the way one pursues his vocation or his spiritual life?
2. **48:26.** Why are drunkards a staple of comedy? What about their behavior makes us laugh? From the drunkard's viewpoint, why is intoxication not a laughing matter?
3. **48:29.** How does the sin of pride obstruct one's view of reality? This verse mentions pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. Though these three vices are closely related, how are they different from each other? How can you recognize them in your own behavior?

Chapter 49

For understanding

1. **49:1.** What lands do the people of Ammon occupy? How does Genesis trace the origin of the Ammonites? For what does Jeremiah fault them? What will be their punishment from the Lord? Though it is not mentioned here, with whom did the Ammonites conspire to resist Babylonian rule? Whose assassination does the king of Ammon sponsor? Who is the Ammonite national deity? When do the Ammonites dispossess Gad?
2. **49:7–22.** Against whom is this oracle of judgment addressed? Since Jeremiah's tirade against Edom is related to Obad 1–16, what is the nature of the relationship between these two oracles?
3. **49:7.** Where is Edom located? As longstanding enemies of Israel, how are the Edomites known in the biblical world? How does Genesis trace the origin of the Edomites? For what does Edom face severe judgment? What promise of future salvation is given to Edom? Where is Teman, and what did it produce?
4. **49:28.** Who are the Kedarites? What will happen to them when the Lord's judgment falls? What are perhaps the kingdoms of Hazor?

For application

1. **49:1–2.** Regarding possession of this world's lands and goods, how secure are your possessions? How quickly might your most secure possessions vanish without hope of return or reparation? What would you do if such a disaster were to happen?
2. **49:16.** How does God often deal with prideful people? What is the difference between humility and humiliation, and from where does each originate? In your experience, has humiliation served as a remedy for your pride?
3. **49:18.** How does this vision resemble the condition of sites like Chernobyl and Fukushima, both abandoned because of nuclear meltdowns? With what are Sodom and Gomorrah associated? How is their destruction and subsequent abandonment equivalent to the condemnation of a society to hell?

Chapter 50

For understanding

1. **50:1.** Where was Babylon built? How does the Lord execute his plan for Judah and its neighbors through it? What time has now come for Babylon itself? Because it has "sinned" and "defied the Lord", what will happen to it? For what specific sin will the Lord avenge himself on Babylon as well? Why are the Babylonians called Chaldeans?
2. **50:8.** What are the exiles of Judah in Babylon called to do? When does the exile officially end?
3. **50:27.** Of all the offences Babylon commits at the height of its power, what is the most egregious? For what will the Babylonians thus be repaid?
4. **50:34.** How is the Lord a redeemer? What is the nature of the kinship between God and Israel?

For application

1. **50:4.** Seeking the Lord can sometimes be an emotional pursuit. Why do you think the people of Israel and Judah weep as they return to the Promised Land? Have your own overtures toward the Lord ever been a cause of weeping? If so, on what occasions? What kind of tears were they: tears of sorrow or of joy?
2. **50:8.** In a flock of sheep moving from one grazing ground to another, what do the rams at the head do? In a migration of Israelites returning to their homeland, who would be expected to lead them?
3. **50:15.** This verse suggests that the law of retaliation (“eye for eye, tooth for tooth”, etc.) be imposed on Babylon. If you retaliate for an injury by doing to the perpetrator what he did to you, how do you right the wrong he has done? Likewise, how do you set the stage for perpetuation of further injury?
4. **50:34.** According to the Ignatian rules for the discernment of spirits, how does the evil spirit act in a soul that is progressing in virtue? Likewise, how does the good spirit act in the soul that is going from bad to worse? Why would the Lord either cause or allow a sinful soul to experience unrest?

Chapter 51

For understanding

1. **51:5.** About what is Jeremiah adamant? However, what will happen to both the northern and southern tribes?
2. **51:7.** Of what is a golden cup a sign? What is the Lord’s will that Babylon should do? In this way, for whom does Babylon serve as a divine instrument of judgment?
3. **51:15.** To what is the work of creation, with the sky suspended over the earth, compared? What belief of ancient Israel does this reflect?
4. **51:63.** Where was Babylon built? What does the symbolic act of binding the words of the prophecy to a rock that is hurled into the river, never to be seen again, reinforce?

For application

1. **51:1.** According to the note for this verse, the “spirit of a destroyer” is a hot, dry wind from the desert. In your part of the country, from which direction do hot, dry winds (such as California’s Santa Ana winds) tend to come? What environmental conditions do they bring about? How can such winds be seen as a sign of divine judgment?
2. **51:8.** Read the note for this verse. How does the “prophetic perfect” tense as applied to the city of Babylon resemble the cry of the angel in Rev 18 about the fall of Babylon the great?
3. **51:15.** According to the note for this verse, ancient Israel viewed the world as a cosmic sanctuary and the Temple as a replica of the cosmos. How do we moderns view the world? If it is not a cosmic sanctuary, what is it for us? If we have lost the ability to see the world as a sacred space, how can we regain that view?

Chapter 52

For understanding

1. **52:4.** What is Zedekiah’s ninth year? Since the king’s tenth year began in March-April, what time period did the long siege of Jerusalem cover? What is the tenth month?
2. **52:12.** What is the fifth month of the year? What do Jews in the exilic and early postexilic periods do in the fifth month? Who is Nebuzaradan, and what is his role in the siege?
3. **52:17–23.** Of what is the Temple plundered? Why is no mention made of the Ark of the Covenant or of the golden altar of incense?
4. **52:28–30.** What do these verses record? Why may this figure refer only to the royal and religious leaders deported to Babylon? Although Jeremiah does not mention the initial exile of Judahites in 605 B.C., which others does he mention? What is known about this last deportation?

For application

1. **52:1–34.** What is an epilogue? What function does it serve in a narrative? If you had to write the history of your grandparents, what might the epilogue to that history look like?

Jeremiah

2. **52:9–11, 31–34.** Compare the fate of Zedekiah with that of his predecessor, Jehoiachin, who, though imprisoned in Babylon, eventually was released and ate at the king of Babylon's table. Why the difference? Why is the punishment of an offender who resists capture often more severe than that of one who submits to it?
3. **52:17–23.** What kinds of material treasures does the Catholic Church possess? How might the Church respond if all the treasures of the Vatican were looted? What might be the minimum that the Church requires to keep alive her liturgical forms of worship?