

Jeremiah Chapters 45-46 John Karmelich

1. OK, I'm tired of talking about the Babylonian invasion of Israel. The good news is so is Jeremiah. That's why the rest of this book focuses on other topics. Since Babylon finished conquering Israel for the most part and those of us who've studied Jeremiah to date know "that's that". Why's there more chapters? Back in Chapter 1 and to start Chapter 45, God told Jeremiah he's a prophet to the nations (plural). So the rest of this book except for a very short Chapter 45's about God's plans for other nations "in the neighborhood".
 - a) So before you get to your title, hit us with the "why should we care" part? For starters it is to show that God isn't just the God of Israel, but of the whole world and He'll show that in these chapters by stating fairly accurately some predictions of those nations "in the area".
 - b) We get that. So what does it have to do with us? Let's just say that each of these stories of nations around Israel have lessons for us. In this lesson, I'm only going to focus on one of them, which is Egypt. Before that I need to explain Chapter 45.
 - c) Keep in mind Jeremiah's all done talking about the Babylonian plans to invade Israel. We will still get lots of stuff about Babylon itself as they interact with the other nations we are reading about to the end of the book. However, that's not the purpose. The purpose is to state the destiny of each of these nations. Why, is a great topic. Sorry, first Chapter 45.
 - d) In this short chapter it occurs back before Israel is destroyed. It's essentially a reassurance to Jeremiah's "sidekick" (Baruch) that everything will be ok. Remember that he never got visits from God the same way Jeremiah did. Baruch just believed in God and he trusted in Jeremiah's words and preached what Jeremiah told him to preach. Chapter 45 is basically here to assure Baruch that it's not the size of the ministry that counts. It's going to be ok, is the essential message. He's worried about what's going to happen to him. He believes the message that the destruction of that land will occur soon. The underlying message to us is if God calls us to a "non-grand scale" role like Baruch, it's a reassurance that God's got our back. It isn't the size of the ministry that counts. It's the loyalty to what He calls us to do.
2. That leads to the main topic of this lesson, Egypt. You may or may not care about Egypt, but stop to consider the fact that Egypt may be the longest "continuing" entity on the planet. Obviously it existed before Israel as that country was "born" in Egypt. They had a dynasty for millenniums as they in effect ruled the Middle East for a very long time before Israel was around. Babylon had a beginning in Genesis, but they in effect ended 70 years after they conquered Israel. As best I can tell, since Egypt is around today, they've had a history as an "entity" that may be longer than any one on the planet. Could I be wrong? Sure, but I can't think of a country with that long a history.
3. That leads to the important question, why should we care? It's not to learn Egyptian history even though it'll be a big background topic of this lesson. It's the fact Egypt is symbolic of the world in the bible. Babylon is associated with rebellion against God (think tower of Babel). While Egypt is simply associated with the world without the influence of God Himself. The fact that Egypt has a destiny that lasts until "today" and counting is symbolic of the fact that the "world" without God's going to be around until Jesus return and after that! Could I be reading too much into that? Yes, but the fact that Egypt as an entity has been around since "Genesis" and besides Israel, is the only entity still around today, obviously God's keeping them around for a reason. It'll be discussed in this lesson, to put it mildly. My point being is I'm not here to give us an "Egypt history & destiny lesson" to teach us about Egypt per se, but to understand what's God's plans for "the world" who won't or haven't committed their lives to Him and why that matters.
 - a) Even if you could care less about Egypt, think of this lesson as an understanding of why it is that Egypt (i.e., the world) is still standing despite the fact they've rejected Israel as well as Christianity and why God "keeps them standing". Yes there are lessons for us in that.
4. All of that leads to my lesson title: "How God deals with those making a difference for Him and how He deals with the world of nonbelievers". As we go through it, hopefully it'll make sense.

5. With that said, let me go over the key points of these two chapters.
- a) Chapter 45 is only five verses. It was written to Baruch a few years before Jerusalem went down for the count. I suspect it was given to Baruch when it sunk into him that he had to pay a high price to be a witness for God. He was convinced he'd have to suffer horribly. I believe he got the idea that God will win in the end, but since "Israel" is losing in the short run he'll suffer with them.
 - i) Jeremiah's role as a priest comes into play here. The essentially purpose of a priest is to draw people closer to God. To use one of my favorite expressions, their job is to "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted". Well Baruch's afflicted here as we read of Jeremiah trying to give him comfort through it all.
 - ii) The essential message is "it's all worth it". He's reassuring Baruch that he has great eternal rewards and God's well aware of what he's going through. It is a reminder to us that if we only focus on this life, we'll be miserable. If we realize there will be an eternity that's well "eternally longer" than this life, we can have joy through any and all situations we're going through at this point.
 - iii) I believe that is why this little section is given here before we start reading chapter after chapter on what'll happen to other nations in the neighborhood. In effect we are about to read about the horrid fate of lots of people around the world of people who ignore a commitment to God and only focus on their life. Therefore, before it all begins, God wants to give a positive word to believers that "it's all worth it".
 - iv) OK, I beat that point to death. Time to discuss Egypt!
6. The first nation Jeremiah chooses to focus on is Egypt. It's significant because Israel "was born in that place" and have had a relationship with them (both good and bad) through the millenniums.
- a) In this lesson I'll touch upon Egypt's history "pre-Jeremiah" as well as a brief history of the nation of Egypt after all of this, but the key point is Jeremiah lays out their destiny here in this section of his book. Note that he's not the only one. Isaiah and Egypt both have their own references to Egypt's destiny and I'll do my best to tie them together to explain what is their destiny and more importantly, why we should care!
 - b) As I stated Egypt in the bible has always been a symbol of "the world" while Babylon is a symbol of open rebellion against God. Yes Egypt was full of idols so the pictures overlap a little. Still Egypt is around today while Babylon for all intents in purposes is gone today (but of course God could always resurrect if He desires.) So my question is why did God keep Egypt around so long? Since Babylon conquered them, have they ever conquered a nation or a group? No. They've remained a "lowly" nation and have been part of empires since that date as well as self-governing as they are today. Still God preserves them as it's His plan to make Egypt part of His "long term" witness that God's still in charge and if He wants Egypt around until the "end", so be it. We'll discuss the "why" more in this lesson.
 - c) As to the specifics of this chapter, Jeremiah describes the destruction of Egypt as an entity that's significant. Again, Egypt was a force to be reckoned with for millenniums. The first part of this chapter talks about a key battle in history where the Babylonians defeated that nation. It's significant as it ended Egypt's history as a great power. Then Jeremiah tells us of it's complete fall to the Babylonians while the Jewish people ran there "for safety".
 - d) In fact, Jeremiah lists the three main cities where the Israelites lived after they ran there to avoid the Babylonians. The point is there's no avoiding God's judgment even if we return to "the world". It's as if God's "hunting us down" just to teach we can't avoid judgment.
 - e) Yes these chapters are tough reading. It teaches of Baruch's salvation for being loyal to the plans of God. It teaches of the Israel's destruction (those in Egypt) for ignoring God. We'll get verses about Egypt's own destruction and their preservation as a nation.
 - f) We get all this in effect to remind us that God's got a plan for the world. We can choose to be a part of the "winning team" or "losing team" and benefit or suffer based on our choices of which team we join! With that said, time for details. Thanks as always for reading.

7. Chapter 45, Verse 1: This is what Jeremiah the prophet told Baruch son of Neriah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, after Baruch had written on a scroll the words Jeremiah was then dictating: ² "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: ³ You said, 'Woe to me! The LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am worn out with groaning and find no rest.' "
- a) First, I always say that bible verses need to be read in context. The last chapter dealt with Jeremiah and the Israelites running for their lives to Egypt even though God warned them not to go there. We'll discuss their fate in Chapter 46. That's only five verses from now. In the meantime we have these five verses about Baruch. What's the deal? I'd argue it is here because effectively he's possibly the only convert Jeremiah had. I'm positive it's a lot more than that. In effect it tells about the rewards and pitfalls of the ministry.
 - b) Let's back up a little and talk a little about Baruch. He believed Jeremiah was a prophet of God and even read Jeremiah's scroll publicly when he was in prison. Since Baruch heard and read what Jeremiah preached he had to be wondered, "What about me? Must I suffer like everyone else?" I think these five verses are here to say to Baruch, yes the ministry life is hard at times. However, it's all worth it. With that let me explain the details.
 - c) This particular story goes back before the fall of Jerusalem when the last king was still the king, so to speak. The occasions was Baruch was taking dictation from Jeremiah. Then it appears that Baruch gave his own "woe is me" speech. For those of you who've read most or all of Jeremiah to date, he's had his own moments like this. Now it's time to comfort his friend Baruch. I'll bet Jeremiah is thinking, "Baruch, I've been there. I know it's tough. I'd be willing to share with you what it's like.
 - d) I know of people in the ministry who've had to hide out due to life threatening moments. If you want to get into the professional ministry, the point is it comes with a price. Many years ago, when I first got into this, I was correctly warned, "Beware, if you're really want to make a difference for Jesus, stuff is going to happen." Let's just say I've suffered a lot of tough "stuff", and I realize there are dark demonic things behind such stuff. Whether that is true or not, I just know that when I'm working to make a difference for Jesus, I consider it a "badge of honor" that things happen at that time. I've never met a person who's in the ministry life who hasn't experienced something like that.
 - e) That little scary speech leads me back to Baruch. At that moment he was scared for his life as he didn't know if he'd be "wiped out" with the coming Babylonian army. Therefore it's Jeremiah's role here as a priest to say in effect, "It's going to be ok". I know it's tough right now and I'm not saying it's going to be easier in the future. God's saying that it worth it.
 - f) With that thought in mind, back to the text.
8. Verse 4: The LORD said, "Say this to him: 'This is what the LORD says: I will overthrow what I have built and uproot what I have planted, throughout the land. ⁵ Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the LORD, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.' "
- a) The first thing Jeremiah wants to get across is God won't stop His judgment on the nation of Israel just because Baruch was a convert. There's a biblical view that He'll never destroy a place if God fearing people exist there. That's one reason why I argue for the church to be raptured prior to all the horrid aspects of Revelation. Meanwhile Jeremiah's telling him yes that rule is in effect, but Baruch's salvation won't save Jerusalem. Instead, God's going to preserve Baruch's life. Does that mean he didn't die? Of course not. It means he wasn't going to be a victim of the Babylonian invasion. In reality, it probably means he lived out the rest of his life either in Egypt or in the Babylonian Empire somewhere. We don't get a specific reference to what happened to Baruch after this. Jeremiah just says in effect, you'll live through this. It won't be a life of luxury, but God's well aware of the risks you took to be a witness for me. That's in effect what He's saying to us. He never promises us we'll be rich and famous, but He promises He'll use our lives to make a difference for Him.

- b) So let me ask the other relevant question? Why put these five verses here? Yes I'm aware that shorter versions of Jeremiah exist where this section is elsewhere. After all Chapter 44 was a warning about the Israelites going to Egypt and Chapter deals with Egypt's fall. So why have five verses about Baruch in the middle of the whole Egypt tragedy? Then tell us why we should care while we're in that neighborhood?
- i) It's here because the world around Jeremiah and Baruch was falling apart. Yes that was the case when this section was written and it's "more the case" after the end of Chapter 44. God wanted Baruch to know in effect "it's worth it". Yes life isn't good at the moment. Yes we have problems bigger than we can handle. No we have no idea how we'll get out of this mess. All we do know is there is a God and if we've committed our lives to serving Him, then He promises to be there with us through all of that. OK, I've pounded that point over our heads enough already.
 - ii) So why is it in this location? So when we read about things going horribly wrong, and life isn't getting better, we can realize God's still "got our back" so to speak, if everything around us is falling apart. God never guarantees prosperity, but I have seen him guide His people through the worst of things if we're willing to trust that He will guide us.
 - iii) The interesting thing is while I was preparing this section, I got a bunch of texts of which the key point is that person who is a Christian had "had it with life and was seriously considering suicide". Obviously I did what I could to talk that person off of "the ledge" and explain how God wasn't through with their life. My only point here is that we all go through our "Baruch moments" where we don't see a solution in sight. That's when God works through a Jeremiah in our life to remind us we'll be fine if we trust God through such times. It's a reminder that "this too shall pass" and everything will work for those who trust in God for His glory. That person is still alive today, but I admit it was a tough night.
 - iv) Meanwhile it's time to travel to Egypt.
9. Chapter 46, Verse 1: This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations: ² Concerning Egypt:
- a) Keep in mind the bible is mainly written to believers to teach us how God expects us to be a witness for Him. Yes a lot of the bible explains who Jesus is and makes predictions. Still I consider most of the bible a guide for believers.
 - b) I open with that because Jeremiah states that God gave him this word to "Egypt". Yes that means Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to more than just the Israelites. Of course, God cares for all people. My point is even as we read about the history of Egypt through most of this chapter plus some other comments I'll make keep in mind this is "for us". So when we read about Egypt's history, it's not to learn history, it's to teach us first and foremost of our relationship with God. My point is simply that there are things here "for us", and not just to learn ancient history. Hopefully that thought will get you to read more.
10. Verse 2 cont: This is the message against the army of Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:
- a) The first thing I'd like you to know about the next set of verses is technically it's past tense in the sense that Jeremiah's describing a battle that already occurred by the time he got to Egypt. The battle in Carchemish is considered a key battle in ancient history. Let me give a little background here as it affects the text.
 - i) Carchemish was located in northern Syria and is on the border with Turkey. It's also on the Euphrates River. The battle fought here was a turning point in the rise of the Babylonian Empire. Think of it as the key battle that changed the course of the Middle East history. Remember that for millenniums Egypt was the "big boys on the block". They'd come, conquer, then take trophies back to Egypt.

- ii) Again in 605 BC (before Jerusalem was destroyed), Carchemish was the battle that changed the Middle East. It was where these two great armies fought and to keep it simply the Babylonians won. After that Egypt never defeated anyone after that. The actual destruction of Egypt is discussed later the chapter.
- iii) Let me give a quick history of Egypt "since then". They always existed as an entity but were part of larger empires. They were part of the Babylonian Empire. When the Persians conquered the Babylonians, they inherited Egypt. Then Alexander the Great led the Greeks to conquer the Middle East etc. Then the Romans conquered "everything in site" and at one point conquered everything on the Mediterranean.
 - a) To finish Egypt was part of the Byzantine Empire, which was the "eastern" half of the Roman Empire. When Islam grew, it eventually became part of various Muslim dynasties. It was part of the Ottoman Empire for the most part until World War I. After that it was a kingdom and part of the British Empire essentially until 1954 where they became a modern Republic.
- iv) So in a sense, Egypt wasn't in control of Egypt from the battle of Carchemish to the early 1950's. But John, don't you always preach that Israel was the only nation that was conquered, scattered and came back together to be a nation? Yes. Egypt was a nation that was conquered many times, but never scattered. Realizing that Egypt's history goes back to Genesis in the bible and had empires that lasted thousands of years, they've had a long history, even though they haven't in a sense won a battle or a war where they've conquered anyone in millenniums.
- b) OK John that was interesting and now I know more about Egypt than I ever care to know. Yes I know you've only scratched the surface to describe a nation older than Israel. Why is it I should care about them? Thought you'd never ask. Because the nation of Israel was in effect born in Egypt, it became a "model" of the world without God. I'm convinced God is keeping Egypt around simply as another proof that the Bible is the word of God. It is like saying, need evidence the bible is true? Look there really is an Egypt and there really is an Israel as they both stand today. Yes of course there's a lot more to it than that. Egypt had a history that originally worshipped a single God then a multi-god history. Then they were for the most part a Christian nation then a Muslim one. The underlying point is we've had a long history of Egypt and God's has eternal plans for them, as He does for the all people who turn to Him. Since Egypt is a model of that, it's still "around".
- c) OK John, enough of Egypt's history. What does it have to do with these verses? Jeremiah is giving details of this famous historical battle (a relatively short time before the Israelites named in Chapter 44 were in Egypt). I believe the underlying point to them is, "Hey think Egypt is going to save you from war? Realize what happened to them at Carchemish as it is a taste of what's going to happen to them as a significant entity.
- d) Therefore, Jeremiah describes this battle not so much to describe history for history's sake, but to warn the Israelites not to trust in Egypt. The model for us is about not returning to trust in "the world" after we've trusted in God. Why do you think the early bible books do condemn the Israelites from returning to Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:16 as I stated in the last lesson). In effect, it's God's way of saying, "there's no turning back to the world you came from before we gave our lives to God".
- e) So does all of this mean Egypt is evil and they're not saved? Of course not. Christians still exist there but they are few in number. Salvation is an individual thing. There also will be a judgment of nations when Jesus returns based on how they treated Israel. I won't get to all of that here other than to say there is national judgments as well as individual ones.
- f) Just realize then from Verse 4 to Verse 12 coming up is a poem. It's written about Egypt's loss of the battle of Carchemish that took place when the last of the Israelite kings was still in power. The message to the Israelites back then was not to trust in Egypt for salvation. I would say the similar message to us is not trusting in "the world" for our salvation.

- g) Before we get there, just realize that Verse 2 that we read a page or two back was simply a starting point to say in effect, "Remember the battle that Egypt lost?" With that said, let us start on the poetry describing this battle.
11. Verse 3: "Prepare your shields, both large and small, and march out for battle! ⁴ Harness the horses, mount the steeds! Take your positions with helmets on! Polish your spears, put on your armor!
- The first two verses are about battle preparation. It's thinking, "this is it, we're all set we'll win this one". It's like every sport team feels at the start of the season before the reality of the competition of battle begins.
 - For those who don't know, soldiers in ancient battles had two shields. A small one used in battle to counterattack swords and spears and large ones designed to protect the body. In many ancient battles groups would form as a unit with the large shields to protect them.
 - These verses describe preparing for battle. Besides shields, horses were used, helmets to protect one's head etc.
 - With that established we get into the heat of the battle in the next few verses.
12. Verse 5: What do I see? They are terrified, they are retreating, their warriors are defeated. They flee in haste without looking back, and there is terror on every side," declares the LORD. ⁶ "The swift cannot flee nor the strong escape. In the north by the River Euphrates they stumble and fall.
- Here in poetic form, we get the battle news! It's from the Egyptian perspective and to put it mildly, the Egyptians were losing badly.
 - Remember that Carchemish was a large battle site in Syria adjacent to this river. If you care to know the site was rediscovered by archeologists in the 1800's as it sat in ruins for a long time. (You can "wiki" it if you want more information.)
 - Again, realize why this is written. Not to give us an Egyptian history lesson. It's to say in effect, "Israelites don't trust in Egypt to protect you" (back then) as it's saying to us, do not trust in anyone but God to guide our lives. Don't look back to the world for guidance.
 - Let me explain that practically. Does it mean we can't have non-Christian friends? Of course not. Does it mean we can't earn a living? Of course not. The issue has to do with who we are looking for to guide our lives. God doesn't say to us, "You are saved now. Go enjoy your life and I'll see you on judgment day." He saves us for a purpose. That purpose is to be a witness for Him. It's to live differently enough for people to see that we are a witness for Jesus in all that we do.
 - What about the practical aspect back then. The Israelites feared for their lives. The issue is God told them to surrender to the Babylonians. The fact they turned from that command is the underlying point of this chapter for them.
 - So how do we know what to do next? We don't have any Jeremiah's to tell us what to do and not to do. In a sense we do in the fact the bible is our guide as to how He wants us to live as a witness for Him. Over and above that God effectively says, "I gave you a brain and I expect you to use it". If one door closes, try another. We've got to make the best decisions we can with the information we have assuming that we don't violate biblical principals. Studying the bible is how we develop wisdom to make the right decisions as well as praying for His guidance.
 - Meanwhile, I left the Egyptians losing this war badly. Let's continue:
13. Verse 7: Who is this that rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters? ⁸ Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters. She says, 'I will rise and cover the earth; I will destroy cities and their people.' ⁹ Charge, O horses! Drive furiously, O charioteers! March on, O warriors-- men of Cush and Put who carry shields, men of Lydia who draw the bow.
- Keep in mind from the perspective of the Israelites living at that time, that Egypt has been the "big boys on the block" for millenniums. The idea of Egypt losing a war had to seem a thought that's impossible to comprehend. They were always the "winning team". They got mercenary soldiers to join their side as the pay was good and they always win!

- b) Earlier I gave an Egypt history lesson. Next I need to give a Egypt geography lesson. The southern part of Egypt (it includes parts of Ethiopia today) was a hillside area with lots of low mountains. They get lots of rainfall and that rain eventually forms the Nile River. The upper part (what we consider Egypt today, bordering the Mediterranean is a climate that gets almost no rainfall. Egypt has always been dependant upon the Nile River to survive. It rises in the spring when the rainfall in the mountains was at it's highest. That river is a source of flood that nourished the soil near the river. For what it's worth the river is very easy to navigate. Their ships would sail down the river to the Mediterranean and that is how they did damage to other nations on that sea, or else march from Egypt.
 - c) With that in mind, I encourage you to re-read the verses. It talks about the Nile River as it rises up. It talks about mercenary soldiers from nearby countries helping them. The point is they would go do damage to other countries the same way that river rose to overwhelm the nearby land. It describes the fact that Egypt for millenniums conquered whatever was their desire. In that sense, these verses are a poetic way of saying "Business as usual" with Egypt given their history to date.
 - d) With that said, here comes the "however":
14. Verse 10: But that day belongs to the Lord, the LORD Almighty-- a day of vengeance, for vengeance on his foes. The sword will devour till it is satisfied, till it has quenched its thirst with blood. For the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will offer sacrifice in the land of the north by the River Euphrates.
- a) A question to ponder is "why now"? Why did Egypt lose at this point in history? Why did God want the Egyptians to lose now after all of it's victories to date? Yes, one can argue it was because Babylon had a better army or better strategy but it misses the bigger idea. It's the idea that Babylon represents open rebellion against God. If you don't know the "tower of Babel" from Genesis was located in Babylon. That's the first organized rebellion against God and Babylon is associated with it. That's why in bible typology, Egypt represents the world, while Babylon represents open rebellion against God. When we get to the final few chapters of Jeremiah they deal with Babylon so we'll get there.
 - b) Anyway, I'd argue that God allows "the devil his due". It's to show God's greater than all of the things Satan can organize and God can defeat any and all rebellion against Him. In a sense that's what caused Babylon to fall then. Babylon is also discussed in Revelation. I will discuss that when we get to the last two chapters of this book.
 - c) Coming back to these verses, the essential idea is "this is the end of an era". Egypt's about to end its millenniums of being a significant power. Think of all the innocent people that Egypt has killed to satisfy their power. God decided this battle was the time to end Egypt as a powerful entity so to give Babylon as well as other empires that ruled over Israel their due so to speak. God allowed Egypt to dominate for a long time so when Moses rose up it gave a chance for God to show who's really in charge. Roughly a millennium later, Egypt as a significant entity came to an end here. Yes Egypt has had a long history after all this, but their power over other nations came to end essentially at Carchemish. That is why it's one of the most significant battles in world history.
 - d) With that said, these verses are poetry as they describe it as a day of vengeance on Egypt's foes. Over and above Babylon, I suspect it refers to all the groups that Egypt conquered. I suspect there were many groups in that area were happy to see Egypt fall for that reason.
 - e) In summary, these verses are all about defeat from Egypt's perspective.
15. Verse 11: "Go up to Gilead and get balm, O Virgin Daughter of Egypt. But you multiply remedies in vain; there is no healing for you. ¹² The nations will hear of your shame; your cries will fill the earth. One warrior will stumble over another; both will fall down together."
- a) Here we finish the Carchemish poetry. Verse 11 mentions balm. If you don't know balm's an ointment used to heal sores on the skin. Gilead apparently was known for it. What is the point here is no matter how much balm is applied, there's no healing Egypt.

- b) Bottom line is simply that we're reading of Egypt's defeat. It's more than them losing one particular battle. In a sense it was the "beginning of the end" of Egypt as a force the others in the area had to fear. Is it possible Egypt has lost before? Sure, God did damage to them through the whole Exodus thing, but they still remained a force to be reckoned with. This battle in effect marked the end of that.
 - c) With all of that out of my system, let's again remember why Jeremiah's telling this story. It is to warn the Israelites living in Egypt in effect, "They're wasting their time". Yes that will become clear over the rest of the chapter, but I don't want you to miss that. For Christians the issue is about "running back to the world" versus trusting in God. In that sense this is a lesson on "backsliding" so to speak.
 - d) With that said, we're not half way through the chapter yet. It's ok, it'll go quicker now!
16. Verse 13: This is the message the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to attack Egypt:
- a) I don't know how Jeremiah was received in Egypt. The Israelites who brought him there weren't crazy about him as he predicted the Babylonian conquest of Israel. Anyway, now he's living in Egypt and somehow spread the word that their own doom is coming.
 - b) However it happened, Jeremiah still spoke his mind and I'm guessing people who lived in Egypt at that time also heard these predictions.
 - c) I'll also argue that that one reason God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to dominate the Middle East is he became a public witness for God. In the book of Daniel Nebuchadnezzar made public declarations honoring Him. That's one reason he's the most dominant non-Israelite king mentioned in the bible.
 - d) With that section, the purpose of the next section is to explain what's going to happen to Egypt with the Israelites there rebelling against God's will to surrender to Babylon.
17. Verse 14: "Announce this in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol; proclaim it also in Memphis and Tahpanhes: Take your positions and get ready, for the sword devours those around you."
- a) So why are these three particular cities mentioned? The answer is that's where the Jewish people settled when they came to Egypt. Migdol and Tahpanhes are mentioned in earlier chapters as where the Israelites settled and Memphis was a capital city. You may recall in the last study. Jeremiah buried a stone by the government headquarters saying in effect, it was where Nebuchadnezzar would "set up shop" during his overthrow of Egypt.
 - b) The point here is that Jeremiah's predicting again in effect the fall of Egypt and singles out these cities in effect to say the Israelites were not safe there. They fled there to avoid war. Now in Egypt, war is what they'll get. Let's continue:
18. Verse 15: Why will your warriors be laid low? They cannot stand, for the LORD will push them down. ¹⁶ They will stumble repeatedly; they will fall over each other. They will say, 'Get up, let us go back to our own people and our native lands, away from the sword of the oppressor.' ¹⁷ There they will exclaim, 'Pharaoh king of Egypt is only a loud noise; he has missed his opportunity.'
- a) Ok the "beat down" continues in these verses. Verse 16 mentions, "Get up, let us go back to our own people and our native lands". That must be referring to the mercenaries who help the Egyptians. The idea is such men are now thinking, "We're wasting our time here helping them. It's a lost cause. We may as well go home."
 - b) Jeremiah's preaching all of this to say in effect, "Egypt is going to lose and all of those men they call on to help them won't." Again the underlying idea of turning to the world verses turning to God to guide our lives is a waste of time as we're poetically reading here.
 - c) Again think of these verses from the view of the mercenary soldiers. To call Pharaoh a big loud noise is another way of saying "He blew it big time". In that sense the way Egypt was defeated back in Carchemish was the preliminary battle to Nebuchadnezzar wiping them out once and for all. If you read Ezekiel 29:10-11, he says that Egypt would be abandoned for 40 years. Some argue it was at this time and some argue it's "end time" stuff.

- d) Also Isaiah 19:23 mentions that one day there would be a highway from Assyria (again think Iraq) from Egypt to Assyria. When Isaiah wrote this they were enemies. My point is simply that God has future plans for Egypt as an entity as several verses by other major prophets also tell of future predictions about Egypt.
- e) I'm bring all this up here as we read of the end of Egypt as a force to be reckoned with, it's not the end of Egypt as an entity. They obviously still exist today and the bible speaks of a few things that will happen to Egypt in "end times".
19. Verse 18:"As surely as I live," declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty, "one will come who is like Tabor among the mountains, like Carmel by the sea.
- a) Of all things Jeremiah now mentions two mountains in Israel. If you've never been there, one has to keep in mind this isn't the Alps or the Himalayas. Think of it as high hills. Still from an Israelite perspective, it's the highest area one can think of. Carmel is by the ocean and is associated with where Elijah battled the prophets of Baal (1st Kings 18.) Tabor isn't mentioned in the New Testament but some argue it's where Jesus became all white, when He appeared with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17). Now that you have some idea of these high hills, the point is simply that Jeremiah used landmarks the Israelites would know.
- b) So who is the "one who will come like Tabor among the mountains"? Nebuchadnezzar. It is the idea that he via his army would overthrow Egypt their rule to an end. Just as Tabor is the highest mountain in Israel, so Nebuchadnezzar will overshadow what's in Egypt.
- c) Now that I beat that point to death, we can move on.
20. Verse 19: Pack your belongings for exile, you who live in Egypt, for Memphis will be laid waste and lie in ruins without inhabitant.
- a) So is this referring to the 40 years that Egypt will be desolate? Maybe. Since the last verse had references to Israel, in context I suspect it's about the Israelites there. The main thing is Nebuchadnezzar will rule there and like the other lands conquered it will be laid waste. The idea from Nebuchadnezzar's perspective is Egypt fought him so therefore it deserves to suffer for resisting his conquering of the region.
- b) Anyway Jeremiah's on a role describing Egypt's destruction and I'm interfering!
21. Verse 20: "Egypt is a beautiful heifer, but a gadfly is coming against her from the north.
- a) When it says " beautiful heifer" think of the "fatted calf" that's occasionally given up for a sacrifice in different places in the bible. It's the idea that this is a big animal, but it's going down for the count so to speak. A "gadfly" is a biting insect. Again, Jeremiah is using the type of references in this poetry that the locals would understand.
- b) Meanwhile, it's time to pick on the mercenaries one last time:
22. Verse 21: The mercenaries in her ranks are like fattened calves. They too will turn and flee together, they will not stand their ground, for the day of disaster is coming upon them, the time for them to be punished.
- a) As I mentioned the "fatted calf" a moment ago, you get the idea from this verse. The idea is that Egypt depended upon help from mercenaries as I've been implying all through this lesson. The obvious point is they're "going down for the count" with Egypt.
- b) Keep in mind why Jeremiah is preaching all of this. The Israelites were thinking they'd be safe in Egypt from the tragedies of war. God's making it obvious that "no they weren't".
- c) The point for you and me is when we turn from His will, we can't win no matter what. It's describing "backsliding" (for my newcomers, it's a Christian term to describe people who have walked away from living the Christian life.) and the obvious point is it's a waste of a life to try to avoid His will once we are called to serve Him.
23. Verse 22: Egypt will hiss like a fleeing serpent as the enemy advances in force; they will come against her with axes, like men who cut down trees. ²³ They will chop down her forest," declares the LORD, "dense though it be. They are more numerous than locusts, they cannot be counted.
- a) The general idea is that the size of the Babylonian army will be so huge, Egypt can't win if their life depended upon it, which obviously it does (did).

- b) Let me explain the "hiss of a fleeing serpent". When a snake realizes it can't win, it hisses and then slithers away. The way to root out such a snake is literally to burn the area. It is in a sense the analogy being described here. Egypt is not a land known for forests. It may refer to the hill areas of Southern Egypt. The underlying point is simple. Egypt's going to be wiped out and Jeremiah is using colorful poetry to describe it.
- c) Hang tough, we're almost done with Egypt. Five more verses to go.
24. Verse 24: The Daughter of Egypt will be put to shame, handed over to the people of the north."
- a) One of the unfortunate aspects of ancient warfare is the women are taken captive or they become the brides and slaves of the captors. Again, we're describing the horror of war. It was something the Israelites were trying to flee from. God's saying in effect, "You cannot win by running away from Me as everyone you know will suffer because of it."
25. Verse 25: The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "I am about to bring punishment on Amon god of Thebes, on Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods and her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh. ²⁶ I will hand them over to those who seek their lives, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his officers. Later, however, Egypt will be inhabited as in times past," declares the LORD.
- a) So far we've been describing the punishment of the Egyptians, the Israelites living in that land, the mercenary soldiers and even the women. The only thing left is their "gods".
- b) What was custom in that culture was for the victors to capture the statues made to other gods and put them in their "trophy case" to show that their gods are superior.
- c) If you care, Amon was the chief god of Egypt. When Aaron made the golden calf, in effect it was supposed to be "Amon" that lead the Israelites out of Egypt. (See Exodus 32 for that story.) One of the reasons to include this is to show the Israelites that the gods of Egypt is not things that can protect them.
- d) Notice the text then says that Egypt will be inhabited as in times past. So why do they get preserved and most of the nations we read of in the bible get wiped out (as we'll see in the next few chapters)? Why's Egypt singled out for preservation? One can argue it's because Israel was born there. I could argue it's just God's will, "deal with it". What I suspect is the answer is because it's associated with "the world", God preserves it to be around until His return. Yes we have biblical predictions about 40 years of desolation and a highway going from the nation of Iraq (today, Assyria then) to Egypt. The point is God wants to preserve Egypt as an entity to support the idea that bible is His word. It's as if God's saying, you're reading about Egypt, look it's right over there and still standing today.
- e) With that said, we're done with Egypt. Good as I've run out of things to say about them! The last two verses focus back on Israel again.
26. Verse 27: "Do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel. I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. ²⁸ Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, for I am with you," declares the LORD. "Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."
- a) Speaking of long-term preservation, Jeremiah wants to give an assurance to the Israelites that this "isn't over yet". Despite the fact that most of the Israelites were now scattered in the Babylonian Empire and Egypt is about to become part of that empire, God wanted the Israelites to have some assurance that He's not done with them as an entity.
- b) So why is Israel preserved today? Short version, Jesus is going to need a Jewish nation to rule the world from. Couldn't Israel be conquered and come back again? Yes, but Ezekiel wrote in 11:17 when God gathers His people "a second time", one gets the impression that is "it" in effect they'll be around until the Messianic kingdom (i.e., Jesus ruling) begins.
- c) The idea for them is even though the Israelites are losing badly, it's not over yet. Yes they are scattered, but it's a reassurance that God's not done with them yet!

27. I don't know about you, but that's a source of comfort to me. No matter how bad things get, we're assured ultimate victory. It's the old joke of "Hey read the last chapter of the bible, we win!" Like all people there are days when I get down and discouraged. Days occur when I'm not sure how I am going to survive. I heard recently that 80% to 90% of the things we worry about never happen so it makes us wonder why we worry so much.
- a) So despite all the horrors of this chapters. Despite the hard life Baruch had. Despite all of the things the Israelites suffer in this chapter, the hope is "it's worth it. We win in the end, so keep on betting on God's side to win everything". Remember that Jeremiah wrote all of this before it occurred. It was a reassurance he was a spokesman for God.
 - b) Also keep in mind that Peter wrote that it wasn't so much the three years he spent in Jesus presence that convinced him all of this was true, but the prophetic word of the bible is the way he was most convicted this is all true ad "worth it" (2nd Peter 1:19.)
 - c) Therefore, I hope all of this Egypt history was interesting but I'm much more interested in seeing people use their lives to make a difference for Jesus. Hopefully all of this helped in that regards. With that said, I'll close in prayer.
28. Heavenly Father, first we are grateful that You have singled us out for salvation. We don't know You've picked us, but we're grateful You have. Given that fact, help us never to waste the time or gifts You've given us. You've saved us so we'll be a good witness for You. Make it obvious to us how it is we can use our lives as a witness for You. Guide us by Your Spirit Your Word and with the brains you've given us as to how we can best use our lives as a witness for You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.