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Dear Associates and Friends,

October 2010

The Book of Jeremiah comes after Isaiah both in history and in the canonical order of Old Testament books. “[Introduction to Jeremiah](#)” by Dr. Ernest L. Martin is this month’s presentation, along with additional information compiled by me.<sup>1</sup> The Book of Jeremiah in turn sets the stage for important information in the Books of Ezekiel and Daniel.<sup>2</sup> It is a collection of various prophecies intermixed with historical narrative. Jeremiah spoke and wrote to the kings and people of Judah before and just after the fall of Jerusalem.

### *Jeremiah’s Background*

Jeremiah grew to adulthood when Judah was a vassal state of the weakening Assyrian empire during the reign of King Manasseh (son of Hezekiah and grandfather of King Josiah, both good kings), one of the most evil kings of Judah. Manasseh promoted the worship of pagan gods, even sacrificing his own son, as well as practicing divination and sorcery (2 Kings 21:2–9, 24:3–4; 2 Chronicles 33:1–9; Jeremiah 15:1–7).<sup>3</sup>

Jeremiah served 40 years as a Prophet of God. He had associates, in particular one colleague, a secretary called Baruch, mentioned several times in chapters 32, 36, 43, and 45. Jeremiah was imprisoned, tortured, and at times became depressed and cried out to God. At one time he seemed to call God a liar (Jeremiah 15:18), a very dangerous thing to do.

Yet Jeremiah was very close to God. Read Psalm 119, written by Jeremiah according to evidence Dr. Martin developed.<sup>4</sup> This psalm demonstrates that the most important thing in life is to be in intimate contact with God. This is made clear also in the Book of Jeremiah. Its central message is that YHWH is in control of not only the life of nations but also of individuals. Judah’s kings fail, the righteous branch from David is proclaimed (chapter 23). For individuals Jeremiah encourages a close intimacy with God:

**“Thus said YHWH: ‘Let not the wise boast himself in his wisdom, Nor let the mighty boast himself in his might, Let not the rich boast himself in his riches, But — in this let the boaster boast himself, In understanding and knowing Me, For I [am] YHWH, doing kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth, For in these I have delighted, An affirmation of YHWH.**

• *Jeremiah 9:23–24, Concordant Version*

We should boast (or glory, as the King James Version translates the word), in understanding and knowing YHWH. Israel in Jeremiah’s past, and Judah in Jeremiah’s present did the very opposite. They gloried in their own knowledge and understanding of “worldly” things, which meant pagan concepts that included token worship of YHWH. They performed the Temple rituals without caring about the reasons for those rituals. The Temple rituals had become like magical rites. They thought that if they performed the Mosaic rituals and observed days, YHWH was bound by His covenant to bless them and their nation. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this is an introduction to the Book of Jeremiah. It is not meant to be comprehensive. More information about the Book of Jeremiah by Dr. Martin will come with later presentations.

<sup>2</sup> Zephaniah, Joel, Obadiah, and Habakkuk apparently wrote within Jeremiah’s 40 year ministry.

<sup>3</sup> F. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (electronic ed.), vol. 16: The New American Commentary/Logos Library System (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> See Dr. Martin’s “Secret 90: [Who Was the Author of Psalm 119?](#)” where Jeremiah’s authorship is made clear.

YHWH is jealous and He insisted on exclusive worship from Israel and Judah. He would not settle for being worshipped along with meaningless gods represented by idols. This part of the Sinai covenant had been forgotten (Jeremiah 11:1–8, 17:19–27).

Jeremiah reminded them of God’s righteousness. He warned them of God’s judgment.

**“And Yahweh [is] an Elohim of truth, He [is] a living Elohim, and a king eonian, From His wrath shake does the earth, And nations endure not His indignation. Thus do you say to them,**

**‘The elohims Who the heavens and earth have not made, They do perish from the earth, And from under these heavens. The maker of the earth by His power, The establisher of the world by His wisdom, Who, by His understanding, stretched forth the heavens.’”**

• **Jeremiah 10:10–12, Concordant Version**

Judah did not listen.

The time for repentance was past; judgment was soon to come. It was Jeremiah’s task as a prophet of God to warn and pronounce doom upon Judah, a role for which he personally suffered greatly. Babylon, with king Nebuchadnezzar as God’s **“servant”** (Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6) carried out that punishment. Nations around Judah participated with Babylon, and those nations were singled out for excessive evils committed toward Judah and the remnant of Israel. Then, all nations were to suffer judgment and receive God’s justice for evils they have committed. Babylon has yet to receive its punishment. This is the basic story of the Book of Jeremiah. God is in total control.

It is interesting that all commentaries I have seen on Jeremiah largely ignore the significance of chapter 1, where Jeremiah is commissioned, and chapter 25 where Jeremiah’s worldwide commission is detailed. As Dr. Martin notes in his seminal presentation [“The Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization”](#):

**“[Jeremiah] was raised up just before the time of Daniel, just as Babylon was becoming great. Jeremiah was the prophet called to introduce the Axial Period into history from God’s point of view. He was the prophet to show it, to live through it, and to give its outcome. That is what the 52 chapters of the book of Jeremiah are about.”**

Note again what was underlined in the second paragraph of this Newsletter: **the most important thing in life is to be in intimate contact with God**. You are instructed many times in the Bible to love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind (Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12, 11:13, 13:3, 30:6; Joshua 22:5; Ecclesiastes 9:1, Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30, 33; and Luke 10:27).

The apostle Paul referred to Jeremiah 9:23–24 (quoted above) in 2 Corinthians 10:17–18. Paul said, like Jeremiah, that we have something about which we can properly glory in or boast of in our lives. It is not something we should tell others about, but we should glory in or boast to ourselves that we are close to God the Father and our elder brother Christ Jesus.

God knows our hearts (Jeremiah 17:9–10). Feel free to ask God to increasingly open your heart so you put Him first in your heart. What human parent would deny their child such a request? God will honor your request; it is what He wants to do (but He likes to be asked). Why wait?

## **Thank You**

Our role at ASK is to help you increase your intimacy with God by giving you information about our Father, Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God. It is God’s fervent desire that you love Him intensely. The purpose of ASK is to aid you in attaching yourself to God more and more by giving you useful information about Him through a proper understanding of His written word. I trust you find that purpose fulfilled in your own life, and that you find ASK’s service extremely valuable and worthy of your support. If you are not currently helping to support ASK, please do so now. To those who are helping support ASK, we are extremely grateful for whatever you are able to do. God bless you all.

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