

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge

Week 36

Monday	Jeremiah 13-15	Psalm 51	Hebrews 7
Tuesday	Jeremiah 16-18	Psalm 52	Hebrews 8
Wednesday	Jeremiah 19-21	Psalm 53	Hebrews 9
Thursday	Jeremiah 22-24	Psalm 54	Hebrews 10
Friday	Jeremiah 25-27	Psalm 55	Hebrews 11
Saturday	Jeremiah 28-30	Psalm 56	Hebrews 12

Sunday: *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under "Adult Education, Bible Study".*

The Jeremiah readings:

1. See the study summary for week 35 for an introduction to Jeremiah.
2. Ch. 13 begins in the midst of the prophet speaking of the broken covenant. Two parabolic discourses are used, referring to a rotten loincloth and a broken wine flask, these examples of the brokenness of the relationship between the people and the LORD being followed with a classical "Jeremiad" of threat.
 - a. Following threat comes teaching on crime and punishment (14.1-17.27).
 - i. This teaching is followed, in turn, by a renewal of the call to faithfulness (15.10-21).
 - ii. The following passages in chs. 16 and 17 are disjointed, reflecting the assembly of texts to include details of the prophet's private life, wisdom sayings, etc.
 1. Jeremiah's celibacy would be seen in the ancient Near East (in which a large family was seen as a blessing) as involuntary, and thus as a response to a call from God.
3. The narrative continues in chs. 18-20 with a unit in which the prophet's life has symbolic meaning. The prophecy is not in words alone, but in what the prophet does.
 - a. Prominent in this symbolism is the sign of the visit to the potter's, and of the broken flask.
 - i. In the face of this brokenness, the prophet despairs (20.7-8).
4. Chs. 21-24 comprise a unit describing Jeremiah's ministry under Zedekiah. The prominent theme is the relationship between king and prophet, how the king is to hear and obey the word of God.
 - a. The king, of course, embodies the people, and to the extent the king is not faithful this is to be seen as the faithlessness of the people.
 - i. The faithlessness of the king presages the final disaster of downfall and exile.
5. Ch. 25 is interpolated in its current position in the text. It comprises either a foreword or an epilogue to the book as whole, and includes a judgment on the nations.
 - a. The list of nations is of peoples who surround Israel.
 - b. The cup of wine as a cup of judgment may have reference to an ancient procedure of ordeal.

- c. The position of the text is very different between the LXX and MT text traditions (*see* week 35).
6. At ch. 26 a unit which will last through ch. 35 begins. This unit is concerned with the restoration of Israel. The prophet is persecuted, and must contend with false prophets.
 - a. The narrative of persecution is probably one composed by the scribe Baruch.
 - b. The false prophets tell the people what they want to hear, that they are to revolt against Babylon.
 - i. Jeremiah pronounces the unpopular message that Babylon is the instrument of the LORD'S wrath, and the people are to submit.
 - ii. The prophet nonetheless prophesies the end of Babylon's domination.
 7. The climax of the entire book begins at ch. 30. The unit comprises not a unified composition, but a collection of poems on of one theme: salvation after judgment. (Cf. Isa. 40-55.)
 - a. Israel will be restored.

The psalms: N.B. *In The Bible Challenge the Psalter is read twice (once in each half year). We may all be led into new insights, particularly in focusing on praying each psalm (preferably aloud). See the summary for week 1 for a general introduction.*

1. *See* the study summary for weeks 9 and 10.

The readings from the Letter to the Hebrews:

1. *See* the summaries for week 35 for an introduction to Hebrews.
2. Ch. 7 continues the unit which began at 5.11 on the eternal priesthood and eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - a. The priesthood of Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood are compared, and the latter is seen to be superseded.
 - i. This argument leads into the discussion of the eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ (8.1-9.28).
 1. Jesus' priesthood is heavenly, not earthly. In referring to the sacrifice offered by Jesus, the author uses the *ao-rist* tense in Greek (action which is completed). Nonetheless, the structure of the author's argument is one of continuing sacrifice, and the use of the *ao-rist* is to indicate the sacrifice is complete.
 2. A perfect sacrifice is necessary by reason of the sacrifices under the old covenant having been imperfect.
 3. The discussion of the tabernacle under the old covenant is contrasted with Jesus having entered the heavenly sanctuary.
 - ii. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is made in the heavenly sanctuary. He accesses the heavenly sanctuary by virtue of His perfect sacrifice. He is, therefore, mediator of the new covenant.
3. By virtue of Jesus' perfect sacrifice, believers are to persevere in faith (10.1-39). The many sacrifices are contrasted with the one in a message of assurance and of salvation in the judgment of the world.

4. The balance of the letter, up to the final exhortation, blessings and greetings (ch. 13), consists of examples of faith, and how the adoption of the faithful into sonship results in the need for discipline in life.
 - a. The faithful are to endure hardship.
 - b. The faithful are to watch over one another in order to prevent disobedience and apostasy.
 - i. The assembly of the new covenant is in heaven, yet the author addresses the faithful on earth as participants in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.