

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 64  
Jeremiah 24-40

**Key Concepts:** The key concept in this middle section of Jeremiah is that even when God follows through on God's promise of punishment, God still promises to restore God's people.

**Stories:** This middle portion of Jeremiah begins with a vision of a basket of figs, a prediction of wrath via Babylon, some miscellaneous prophecies, Jeremiah's sermon in the Temple, Babylon's dominance of Judah, Zedekiah's good choice to refuse to rebel, Jeremiah's letters to the exiles in Babylon, the Book of Consolation, Jeremiah buys some real estate, a warning to Zedekiah about rebellion, the freeing and then re-enslaving of the slaves, the Rechabites, Jeremiah begins to suffer, the siege of Jerusalem, and finally the fall of Jerusalem.

**Brief Summary:** To understand the events contained within these chapters we need a bit of history. Judah's King Josiah was killed in battle against the Egyptians (609 BCE). He was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz who was carried into exile by the Egyptians who ruled over Judah (609-605 BCE) with Jehoiakim (another of Josiah's sons) set up as a puppet ruler. In 605 the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians. The Babylonians then began a slow but steady conquest of all of Canaan. Jehoiakim, realizing his vulnerability, became a vassal of Babylon. Following a temporary Babylonian setback, Judah rebelled. When the Babylonians and their allies returned, Jehoiakim died (probably assassinated) and was replaced by his son Jeconiah, who promptly surrendered Jerusalem and was carried into exile in Babylon, along with the leading citizens of Judah.

This is where we pick up with Jeremiah's vision of the baskets of figs. God tells Jeremiah that the exiles (represented by a basket of good figs) would be returned from exile and become a great nation. God will work on their hearts and restore them. Those who remain (represented by a basket of bad figs) will be utterly destroyed. The instrument of this destruction will be Babylon, which is carrying out God's will and bringing God's wrath.

Next we find Jeremiah preaching in the Temple to the leadership and people of Judah. He once again explains that unless they repent and return to right worship and living, God will destroy Judah and the Temple. He is arrested and tried. The King releases him because of a precedent set under King Hezekiah who did not have the prophet Micah killed. However another prophet, with the same message is assassinated by the king. What this tells us is that Jeremiah is well connected and well respected.

Jeremiah then writes letters to the exiles in Babylon, telling them to settle down, build houses, make families and bless their captors. This is considered to be treason and leads to a debate between Jeremiah and the prophets who proclaim that Jerusalem will never fall. At about the same time Jeremiah receives a prophecy which describes all of the good that God has planned for the people following their return from exile. It is a word of hope and consolation.

This prophecy is followed by Jeremiah purchasing land from a relative; land that is in Babylonian hands. This is a concrete example of Jeremiah's faith, and God's promise that the exiles will return and inhabit the land. This action will ultimately end up costing Jeremiah his freedom and putting his life at risk.

As we close this section Jerusalem has fallen to the Babylonians, Jeremiah is free but the future still looks uncertain.

1. How did Judah's nationalism conflict with Jeremiah's message of repentance?
2. What do you think of Jeremiah's purchasing of the land?
3. Where do you see God at work in all of these events of history?