



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**JEREMIAH 34-52,
LAMENTATIONS
AND OBADIAH**

Week 4

Life and Consequences

DAY 22

Jeremiah 51:15-26

There are times in everyone's life when they must live with the consequences of their decisions. Would you say most of your decisions have resulted in positive or negative consequences?

- 1.** In God's great creative act, what three of his attributes played a major part (v. 15)?
 - 2.** Idols have no life in them (v. 17) and therefore God calls them: (a) dummies, (b) frauds, (c) useless.
 - 3.** Look at verses 20 to 23. To whom do you think God is referring? (a) the Medes, (b) the Babylonians, (c) the Israelites.
 - 4.** Who would see God repaying Babylon for all she had done against Zion (Jerusalem) (v. 24)?
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- 1.** What poor decision have you made in the past that caused you the worst consequences?
- 2.** What good decision have you made in the past that resulted in the best consequences?
- 3.** What are the three most important criteria you consider before making important decisions?

OPENING

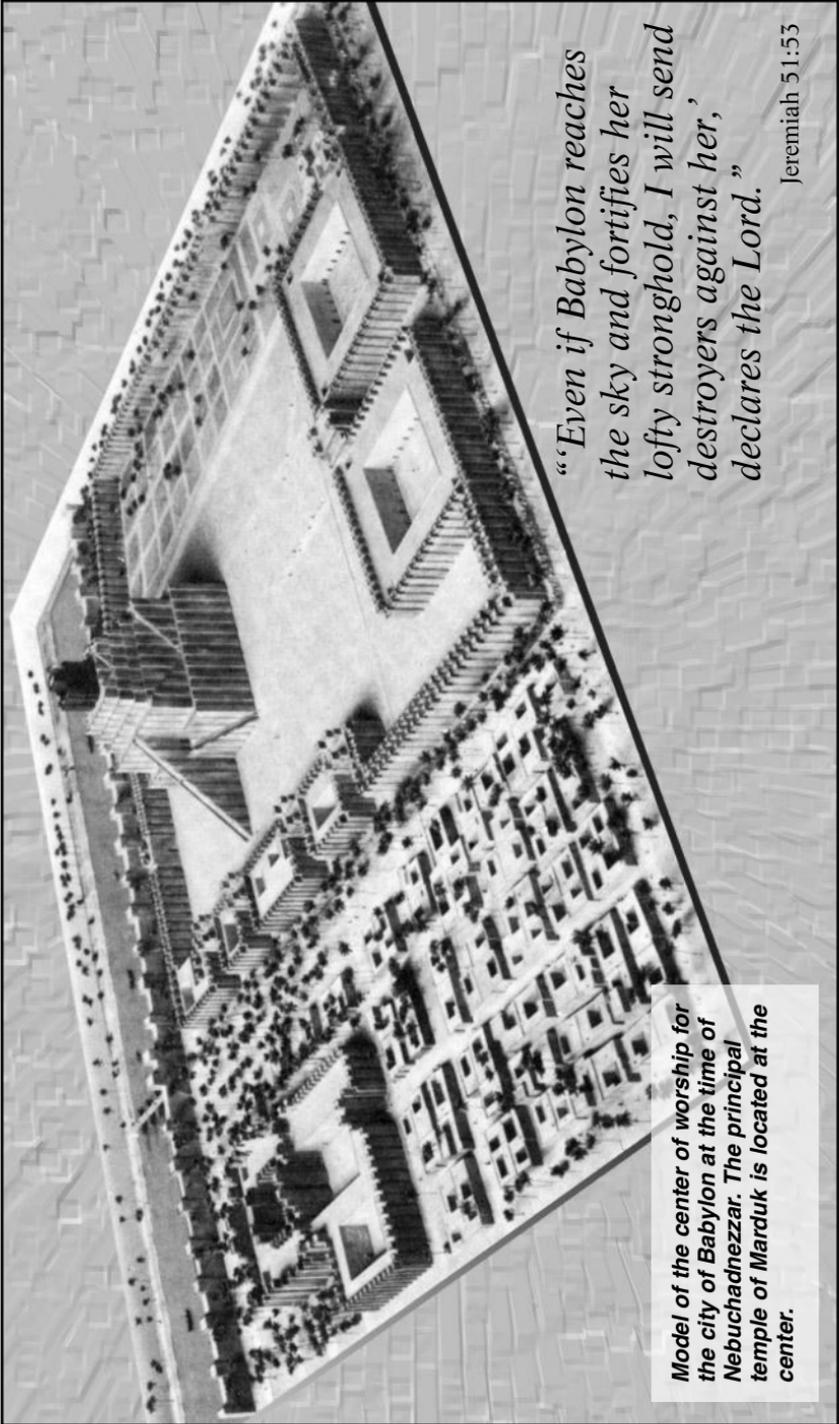
up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word



*“Even if Babylon reaches
the sky and fortifies her
lofty stronghold, I will send
destroyers against her,
declares the Lord.”*

Jeremiah 51:53

**Model of the center of worship for
the city of Babylon at the time of
Nebuchadnezzar. The principal
temple of Marduk is located at the
center.**

The Party's Over

DAY 23

Jeremiah 51:27-64

Have you ever seen anyone experiencing a hangover? How different is their feeling and mood the night before and the morning after?

1. Three kingdoms were going to participate in Babylon's fall. Which were they (v. 27)?
2. Where or what is Sheshach (v. 41)?
3. What were God's people told to ignore when living in Babylon (v. 46)?
4. What did Jeremiah want Seraiah to take to Babylon (vs. 59-60)?
5. When Seraiah arrived in Babylon, what was he to do with the scroll containing all the judgments against Babylon (vs. 63-64)?

1. The Bible teaches that good times built on sin do not last. They later turn sour (Pr 14:12). Do you remember when you had such a "good time" hangover in your life?
2. What were the hangover consequences of your "good times"?
3. Which lasts longer—the good times, or the hangover consequences?

*Many scholars believe the word **Sheshach** (v. 41) is a cryptogram or atbash for the name Babylon. An atbash was a code in which the letters of a name counted from the end of the alphabet were substituted for the letters counted from the beginning.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Humpty Dumpty Moments

Jeremiah 52

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever broken a precious memento or antique? Some things are simply irreversible. Have you ever had any irreversible moments?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Was King Zedekiah a good king or a bad one (vs. 1-3)?
2. What was Zedekiah's punishment at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 9-11)?
3. When the Temple was burned by the Babylonians, what did they do with all the priceless pieces (vs. 17-22)? (a) burned them, (b) carried them to Babylon, (c) melted them down, (d) used them as ransom for the priests.
4. How many people were carried into Babylonian exile from Judah (vs. 27-30)?
5. What did a new Babylonian king do to King Jehoiachin in exile (vs. 31-34)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What are some priceless things in your life that have been broken and can't be repaired?
2. List three things in your life right now that are most important to you. Can you guard them from any Humpty Dumpty moments?
3. What is something that God has repaired in your life that you had believed irreparable?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Evil-merodach** (v. 31). The word evil is simply a transliteration of his name from the Chaldean language—not meant to be descriptive. He was the son of Nebuchadnezzar.*

BABYLONIAN CAMPAIGNS IN JUDAH



- ➔ **First Campaign**— following the Battle of Carchemish (605-604 B.C.)
- - - - ➔ **Second Campaign**— following Jehoiakim's Rebellion (599-597 B.C.)
- ➔ **Third Campaign**— (589-587 B.C.)

First Campaign

Nebuchadnezzar II met the Egyptians at Carchemish, which Pharaoh Neco had held since the demise of Assyria in 609 B.C. (See Day 13). The Babylonians pushed south to Hamath, where they further defeated the retreating Egyptians. Then they swept down the Mediterranean coast to the Brook of Egypt, destroying Ashkelon. As a result Judah became a vassal state of Babylon.

Second Campaign

King Jehoiakim of

Judah rebelled against Babylon about 601 B.C. The Babylonians responded by sending the armies of nearby nations against Judah, then sending their own army to besiege Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was captured and probably died early in the siege. His son Jehoiachin succeeded him. Three months later, Jehoiachin surrendered, and he and the leaders of the city were deported to Babylon.

Third Campaign

King Zedekiah provoked the Babylonians to one final blast of fury against Judah by allying his kingdom with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt. The Babylonians invaded and began systematically destroying each of the Judean cities. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar turned the full attention of his troops on Jerusalem, which was captured, sacked and emptied of nearly all its inhabitants.

Introduction to Lamentations

Authorship: This book is generally understood as being written by Jeremiah. Although the author's name is not given, the style and description fits Jeremiah better than anyone else. Jewish scholarship generally attributes the book of Lamentations to Jeremiah, and Josephus the historian agrees. Christian scholarship also endorses Jeremiah as author.

Setting and purpose: Lamentations has been described as “A cloudburst of grief, a river of tears, a sea of sobs” (*Explore the Book*, J. Sidlow Baxter, pg. 280). The book was written in anticipation of the sad destruction of Judah by the Babylonians, and the destruction of Jewish civil and religious life. These events were tragic in light of God's repeated attempts to persuade Judah to repent.

The design of the book holds an interesting acrostic. All the chapters have the same number of verses except chapter 3, which has exactly three times the number of the others—66. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse begins with a letter in that order. This may have been done not only for poetic reasons, but also to aid memory so that people who knew the Hebrew alphabet could more easily memorize these verses.

One of the more Christ-centered truths expressed in Lamentations is that God suffers with those whom he is forced to discipline. In spite of the terrible suffering being described, in the middle of the book, chapter 3, the word *hope* appears five times. God always leaves room for his mercy and the reconciliation of those who would turn to him.

Reading outline:

Day	Text	Theme
25	Lamentations 1	Memories
26	Lamentations 2	Condemned
27	Lamentations 3	A Ray of Hope
28	Lamentations 4	Fool's Gold
29	Lamentations 5	Judah's Mourning After

Lamentations 1

Everything in life will eventually pass away, and all that will be left are memories (and sometimes those are dim). Are most of your memories pleasant or unpleasant, filled with happiness or sorrow?

1. What does Jeremiah say that Israel remembers in her difficult days of suffering (v. 7)? (a) her disobedience, (b) her land, (c) her treasures, (d) her Temple.
2. When Israel was sinning, what did she fail to consider (v. 9)?
3. During their difficult days, how did the people use the treasures they coveted so much (v. 11)?
4. What became a yoke around the Israelites' neck (v. 14)?
5. There are two things the Israelites crave in their distress—but find neither (v. 16). What are those two things?

1. Everything in life eventually changes. What are several things you wish would always remain the same?
2. What are the three greatest treasures in your life right now? Could they ever be taken away from you?
3. If you could live one part of your life over because of how special it was—what moment would that be?

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

Condemned

Lamentations 2

OPENING
up to the Word

What generally happens to a home or building that has been condemned?

DIGGING
into the Word

- 1.** What was going to be long forgotten in Jerusalem (v. 6)?
 - 2.** In verse 7 we read that the Lord abandoned his altar and his sanctuary. Why do you think he did that?
 - 3.** In describing the wound that Jerusalem had suffered in her siege and burning (v. 13) God says that it is (a) fatal, (b) only superficial, (c) as deep as the sea, (d) paralyzing.
 - 4.** What turned out to be utterly worthless and false (v. 14)?
 - 5.** Before she was destroyed, what had Jerusalem been called (v. 15)?
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LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** What are some of the reasons that a building could be condemned?
- 2.** If your life were compared to a building, would it need: (a) to be condemned, (b) to be renovated, (c) to be added on to, (d) to be treated for termites.
- 3.** Write a description of your life using the imagery of a house. What needs repair?

Lamentations 3

The smallest ray of light can help dispel the darkest of nights. In the midst of any pain and suffering, what hope from God do you cling to?

1. In Jeremiah's complaint (v. 14), he tells God that he became in his people's eyes: (a) a true prophet, (b) a laughingstock, (c) a leader, (d) a pariah.
2. Although all seems dark to Jeremiah, a small ray of hope begins to grow within him. What is the source of this hope (vs. 21-22)?
3. What comfort does Jeremiah offer the Hebrews (vs. 31-32)?
4. What opposites come from the hand of God (v. 38)?
5. Jeremiah urged his fellow Jews to do something that could result in great benefit for them (vs. 40-42). What did he urge?

1. What discouraging circumstances are you facing today, or have you faced in the past?
2. What truth of God brings you a ray of hope?
3. Give yourself some good advice. What would you urge yourself to do in order to have hope in suffering? What aspect of God's nature would bring you the most comfort?

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*“How the gold has lost
its luster, the fine gold
become dull! The sacred
gems are scattered at the
head of every street.”*

Lamentations 4:1



Photo of fool's gold by Omar Cova—PTM

Fool's Gold

DAY 28

Lamentations 4

Fool's gold (iron pyrites) was the rock that some early California miners got confused with the real thing. Have you ever seen fool's gold?

- 1.** In the midst of all the suffering, what previously treasured item had lost its value (v. 1)?
 - 2.** How bad had the living conditions in Jerusalem become for those who were used to living the lifestyles of the rich and famous (v. 5)?
 - 3.** What was considered the best way to die in those days (v. 9) and why?
 - 4.** The conditions were so horrible that the Hebrews were committing their own atrocities (v. 10). How low had they sunk?
 - 5.** What had previously been considered unbelievable (vs. 12-13), but had now happened?
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- 1.** As you consider everything that you are pursuing in your life, does any of it resemble fool's gold?
- 2.** What are some things you once thought were valuable and worth pursuing, but not now?

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Judah's Mourning After

Lamentations 5

OPENING
up to the Word

When was the last time you saw someone mourning a great personal loss? What had they lost?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What did Jeremiah beg God to remember (vs. 1-5)?
 2. Who had Israel submitted to in the past to provide their needs (v. 6)?
 3. How were the people faring under their new conditions (vs. 10-15)?
 4. What questions were the people asking of God (v. 20)?
 5. Jeremiah uttered a prayer of hope mixed with fear in verses 21 and 22. What is the hope and what is the fear?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever mourned the loss of a loved one?
2. What are some other losses you have mourned in your life?
3. What hope do you cling to in the midst of your mourning?
4. Do you ever wonder if God has totally given up on you? What hope can you have that he won't give up on you (Ro 8:1, 31-39)?

Introduction to Obadiah

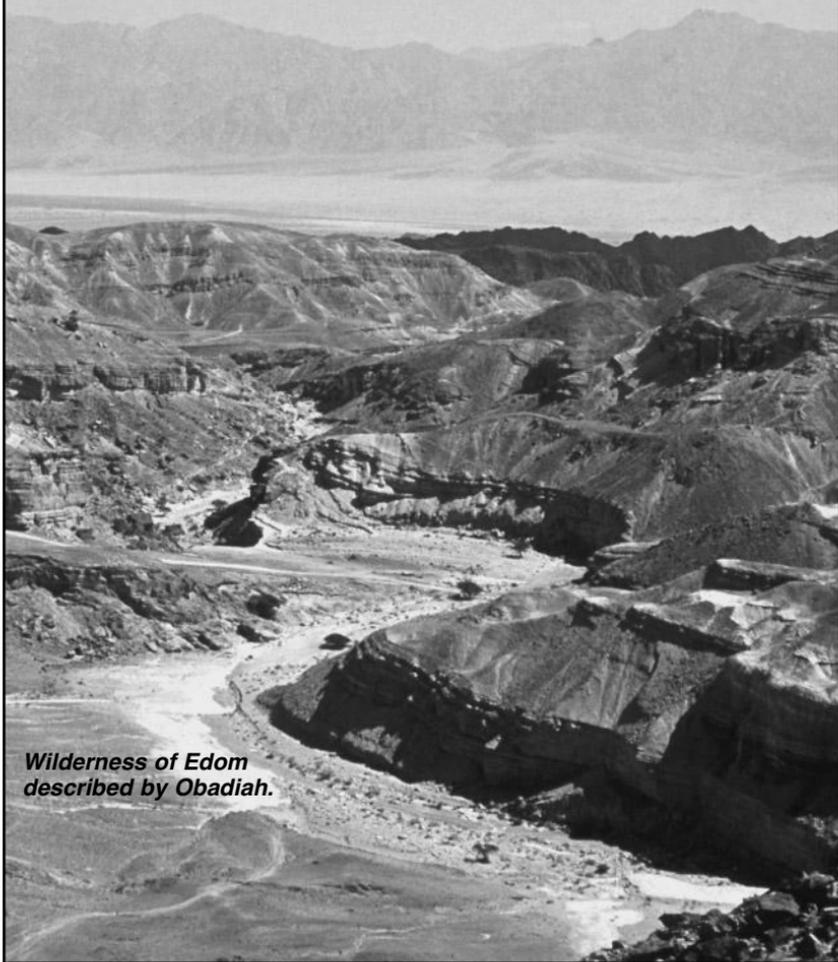
Authorship: Very little is known about the author of this book, whose name means “worshipper of Yahweh.” At least 12 Obadiah’s are mentioned in Scripture. The contents of the book indicate that this Obadiah probably came from Judah.

Setting and purpose: Obadiah prophesied the destruction of the Idumeans (Edomites), who were the offspring of Esau, the brother of Jacob. They lived in Mount Seir, the name of a series of mountains extending from the south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. Mount Seir may have been named after Seir the Horite (Ge 14:6; 36:20) an early inhabitant of that region. Although the area was mountainous, it had some fertile valleys and fruitful soil. Its mountainous terrain made the Edomites feel safe from attack. They lived in rock-carved dwellings, and their defenses were considered impregnable. They scorned all ideas that they could be subjugated, and God condemned their arrogance.

Instead of mourning when their neighbors in Judah were conquered, they gloated and encouraged the Babylonians. They even prevented the escape of many refugees, and delivered up many others to the Babylonians. Apparently they felt safe in doing so, but God made it clear that they would not escape judgment. Their judgment, long held back, was finally realized. It was fatal to them as a people. In the third century A.D., the Alexandrian biblical scholar Origen reported that the Edomites and their language had entirely disappeared.

“The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, “Who can bring me down to the ground?”””

Obadiah 3



***Wilderness of Edom
described by Obadiah.***

What Goes Around, Comes Around

DAY 30

Obadiah

Has anyone ever had it in for you and rejoiced when bad things happened to you? Did you ever wish they would get theirs?

1. What would Edom's friends and allies do to them in the end (v. 7)?
 2. What reason did God give the people of Edom for their coming destruction (vs. 10-11)?
 3. While Edom had failed to help Judah, they had also done even worse than that. What six things does Obadiah accuse them of doing in verse 12-15?
 4. The result for the nation of Edom was not good. What does verse 18 say they would become?
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1. Have you ever known someone who was so jealous of you that they eagerly wished you would fail?
 2. How did you get on their bad side? What efforts did you make at reconciliation? (Mt 18:15-17; Ro 12:18-21).
 3. How did you feel when bad things happened to them? Did you pray for them (Pr 24:17; Mt 5:43-48)? Did God's grace and the mind of Christ guard your heart from bitterness?
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*The people of **Edom** were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. The conflict between the Edomites and Israelites was long and enduring. The Hebrew word edom means "red," a nickname given to Esau because of his appearance at birth (Ge 25:25) and because he sold his birthright to Jacob in exchange for a bowl of red lentil stew (Ge 25:30).*

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