



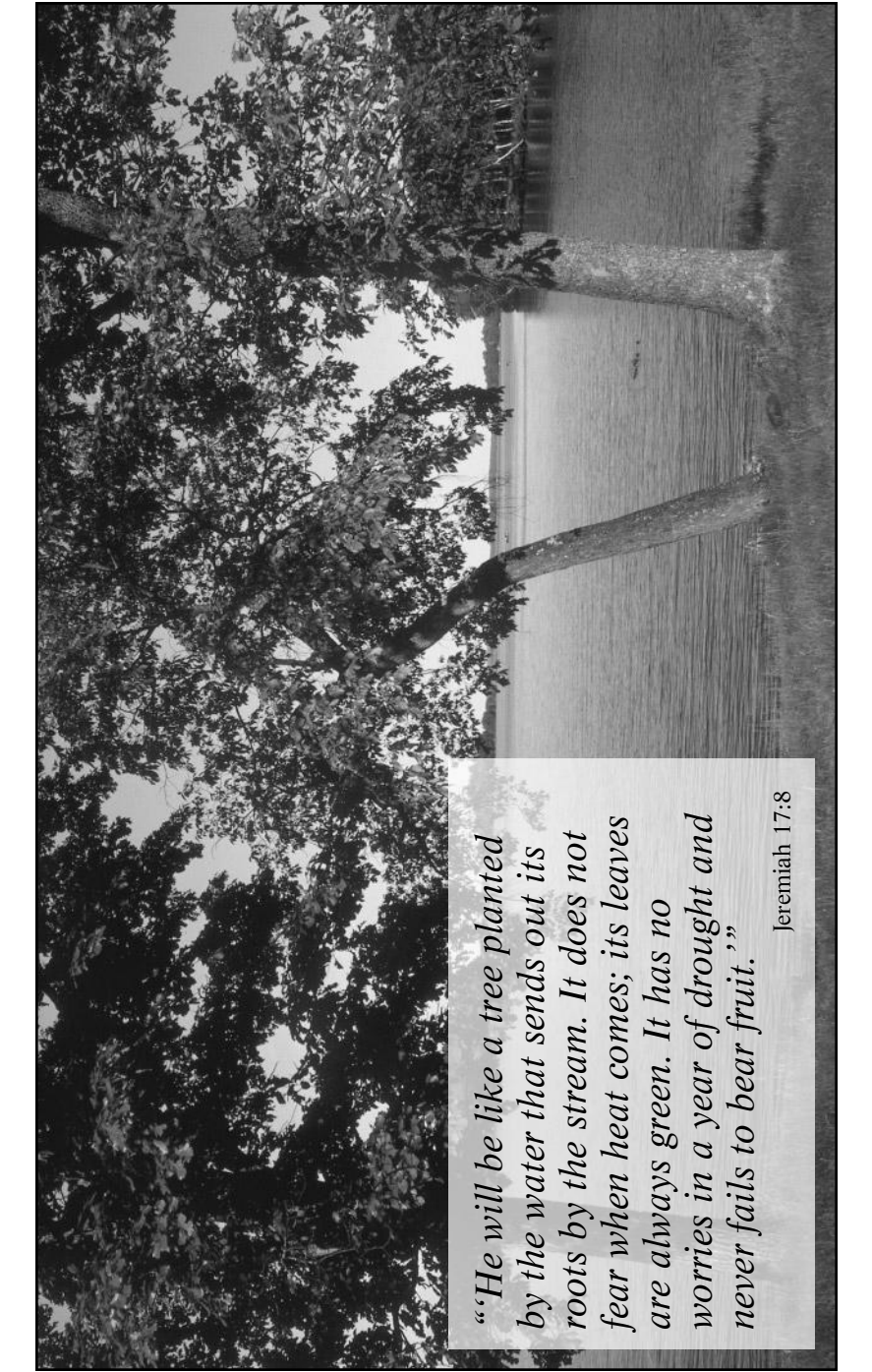
CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**JEREMIAH 1-33**

Week 3



*“He will be like a tree planted  
by the water that sends out its  
roots by the stream. It does not  
fear when heat comes; its leaves  
are always green. It has no  
worries in a year of drought and  
never fails to bear fruit.”*

Jeremiah 17:8

# Engraved Sins

DAY 15

Jeremiah 17

Some sins are more difficult for us to break out of than others. What has been the hardest sin for you to overcome? Does it still tempt you at times?

1. When words were engraved on a tablet with an iron point, they became indelible and permanent. What was God saying here about Judah's sinful state (v. 1)?
2. Idolatry grew so rampant that even the \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 2) were involved.
3. The Lord said that anyone who places his or her trust in man (v. 5) is: (a) wise, (b) foolish, (c) cursed, (d) crazy.
4. What did God say is deceitful above all things (v. 9)? (a) a foreigner's promise, (b) an idol, (c) the human heart, (d) gold and riches.

1. Has any destructive behavior ever become so ingrained in your life that it threatened to take you over? How did you escape? Are you still trying to escape?
2. Remembering times when you became of your self-centered, proud and lust-filled behavior, how did you "come to your senses"? Do you think God was involved?

*"The horns of their altars" (v. 1) were projections on the four corners of an altar. The law of God was supposed to be engraved in the hearts of Israel, but now their devotion was given to idols of wood and stone.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## The Potter and the Clay

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Jeremiah 18–19

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever made something with your own hands—a painting, a craft or a piece of furniture? Did it turn out just the way you wanted it to?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

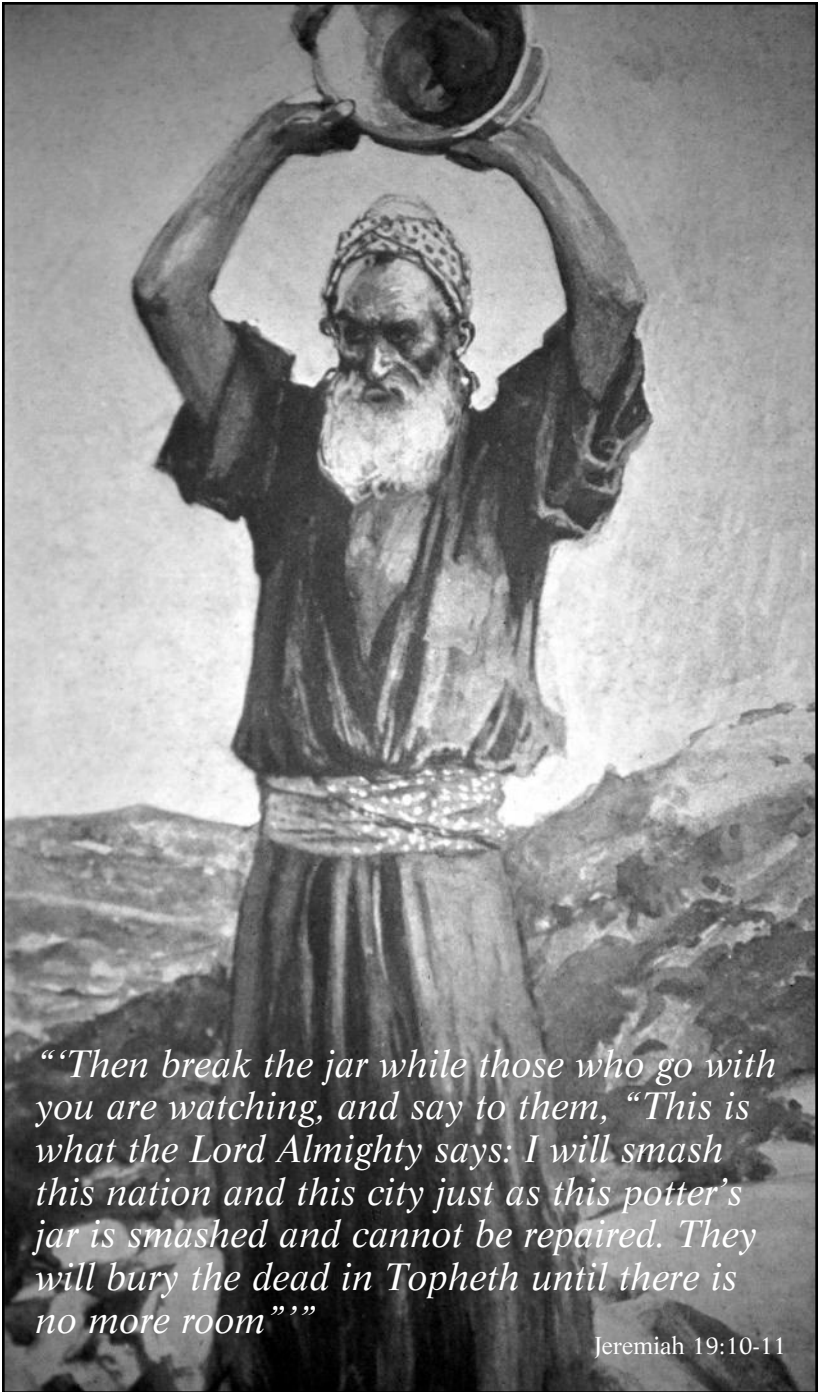
1. How was the marred pot similar to Israel (18:4-10)?
  2. Why did Jeremiah's enemies feel that ignoring his words and attacking him would have no lasting consequences (v. 18)?
  3. What evil practice was Israel engaged in that the Lord would never even think of requiring (19:5)? How was this practice different from God's command to Abraham in Genesis 22?
  4. Why was Topheth a significant place in God's judgment (v. 13)?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you ever had any *broken pot* experiences in your life, where something precious in your life was irrevocably destroyed?
  2. What part of your life has God mended that you thought was broken forever?
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The origin of the name of the city **Topheth** (19:5) is uncertain, but it may derive from the Hebrew word for stove or oven. Topheth was located in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom. It was here that child sacrifice was practiced.*



*“Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, and say to them, “This is what the Lord Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter’s jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room””*

Jeremiah 19:10-11

## Born to Be Reviled

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Jeremiah 20

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever wished that you had never been born? What was happening in your life at the time? How have your feelings changed?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. What did evil Pashur get his name changed to (v. 3) and what did it mean?
  2. Though at times Jeremiah was frustrated at the way his message from the Lord was received by Israel, what happened when he tried to remain quiet (v. 9)? Have you ever felt this way?
  3. What were those close to Jeremiah plotting to do to the prophet (v. 10)?
  4. What day did Jeremiah curse in his despair (v. 14)? Is anyone's life ever truly a waste?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you ever felt as if the word of God were burning in your heart (v. 9) when you were speaking to someone about him?
  2. Have people whom you thought were true friends ever turned on you?
  3. In what way do you feel God may have used you to have a positive impact for him on someone else?
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

**Pashur** (v. 1) was the son of Immer, the deputy priest responsible for maintaining order through the Temple police. He was probably taken captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. In light of Jeremiah's prophecy he must have been doubly humiliated. In Jeremiah 29:25-26, another person holds this office, indicating that the prophecy had been fulfilled.

# Too Little, Too Late

DAY 18

Jeremiah 21

Do you know anyone who got into a terrible predicament and called on God for help? Did they change afterward, or did they continue in the same problematic behaviors?

1. What was Zedekiah hoping that God might do for Israel (v. 2)? Did he give any indication of repentance?
2. Although the Babylonians were outside the city, who was actually going to fight against Israel (v. 5)?
3. What two options was God offering to Judah (v. 8)?
4. Who were the only people who would escape with their lives (v. 9)?

1. When we experience problems in our lives we can often more clearly understand changes we need to make in ourselves. What are some problems you have experienced that have helped you take stock of your life?

2. Is it ever too late for you to turn away from destructive behaviors and ask God to transform you, by his grace?

***Zedekiah** reigned over Judah from 597 to 586 B.C. He was a weak and vacillating king. Though he respected Jeremiah, he lacked moral courage to do what he needed to. Zedekiah was taken into captivity in 586 B.C. (Jer 52:9-11; 24-27) and died in exile as a blinded, deposed monarch (2Ki 25:7; Jer 34:4). The **Pashur** mentioned in 21:1, an official in Zedekiah's government, was a different individual from the priest of the same name who attacked Jeremiah (20:2).*

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on the Word



*Cuneiform tablet including an account of the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.*



*“I will hand you over to those who seek your life, those you fear—to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to the Babylonians.”*

Jeremiah 22:25



# These Three Kings Disoriented Are

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DAY 19

Jeremiah 22

Can you think of any historical leaders who are famous not for their strengths, but their weaknesses?

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1. After God brought his judgment, what question would people ask themselves as they considered the ruins of Jerusalem (v. 8)? What would the answer be (v. 9)?
  2. What was Shallum using to build his palatial home (v. 13)?
  3. What did Shallum think was important in order to display his importance and authority (v. 15)?
  4. What kind of burial would Jehoiakim the king have at his death (v. 19)? That of (a) a prince, (b) a dog, (c) a monarch, (d) a donkey.
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1. If you were suddenly to find yourself rich—what are the first three things you would spend your money on? What might those choices reveal about your character?
  2. Have you ever been in authority over others? Do you ever regret some of the ways you treated those who answered to you?
  3. What are three words you think those who have worked under you would use to describe you?
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**Shallum** (v. 11) was another name for Jehoahaz, the evil son of the righteous King Josiah. He succeeded to the throne after his father's death. Pharaoh Neco of Egypt deposed him after a reign of three months. He would die in Egypt. **Jehoiakim** (v. 18), after being appointed king by Pharaoh Neco, became corrupt and built a lavish palace by exploiting his subjects. He died in 598 B.C. Some think he was assassinated in an attempt to appease the coming Nebuchadnezzar. **Jehoiachin** (v. 24) was the son of King Jehoiakim. He followed his father to the throne for a three month reign after which he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, and was deported to Babylon to spend the rest of his life.

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*“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.’”*

Jeremiah 23:5-6

# Declining Prophets

DAY 20

## Jeremiah 23

Have you ever known a spiritual leader who slowly lost his or her spiritual and moral character? What was the first sign of decline?

1. Because the appointed shepherds of Israel (priests and prophets) had become unfaithful, what was God's long-term solution (v. 5)?

2. What messages (v. 17) were the false prophets bringing to the Hebrews?

3. What did God say was the source of the false prophets' visions (v. 26)?

4. Do you feel this chapter is only an indictment of corrupt religious authorities at the time of Jeremiah—or is this a timeless condemnation of religious abuse?

1. How can you tell when a spiritual leader has stopped following the Lord and is only using the position for personal gain?

2. If someone told you that God gave him or her special secret information about you, how would you respond?

3. Who is a spiritual leader that you greatly admire? What makes you feel he or she is truly following the Lord?

*The Hebrew word translated **oracle** (v. 33) can also be translated "burden"—something that must be lifted or carried. This was the burden Jeremiah had to carry—God's message. When the people asked for guidance from God, Jeremiah announced there was none. God had already spoken; God would forsake them as they had forsaken him. The word oracle was being misused so much (perhaps somewhat like religious clichés today) that God told them to stop using it.*

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*“One basket had very good  
figs, like those that ripen  
early; the other basket had  
very poor figs, so bad they  
could not be eaten.”*

Jeremiah 24:2



Photo by Omar Cova—PTM

## Jeremiah 24

Have you ever bitten into a piece of fruit you thought was good, only to discover that it was rotten?

1. Using the fig analogy, who did God say were the good figs (v. 5)?
2. What five things did God say he would do for them (vs. 6-7)?
3. Whom did God identify as bad figs (v. 8)?
4. What five things would God do to Zedekiah and the other evil leaders and people (v. 9)?

1. Have you ever met someone who seemed incorrigible—unwilling to change?
2. Have you ever been fooled by someone—believing them to be a good person, only to find out that you were mistaken? How were you fooled, and what did you learn in the process?
3. What are the signs that someone may not be what they appear?

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up to the Word

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