

"illuminated by the sun-god." *Moshak* " who is comparable to Shak," (the goddess of Babylon) and *Abdageh*, "servant of the Shining Fire."—(see verse 7.)

**V. 12. Prove . . . ten days.** The trial would thus only be for a short time, but long enough to indicate the probable result of the entire experiment. "If during that period there were no indications of diminished health, beauty or vigor, it would not be unfair to presume that the experiment in behalf of temperance would be successful, and it would not be improper then to ask that it might be continued longer."—*Barnes*.

**Pulse**—Seed herbs, greens, vegetables. They proposed to confine themselves to vegetable diet, with water to drink instead of wine.

**V. 13.** The children that eat, &c. Evidently a number of other youths besides these four were under the same regimen.

**V. 14.** So he consented, and possibly he was not entirely disinclined in complying with their frugal desires for a much less expensive diet.

THE RESULT. V. 15-17.

**V. 15. Fairer and fatter.** Instead being "Worse liking," as had been feared, a marvellous change had taken place for the better. Of course the great secret of this rapid improvement was the Divine blessing on the means employed, just as God had before brought Daniel into favour and tender regard.—verse 9.

**V. 16. Took away, &c.** Thus granting all they wished.

**V. 17. God gave them knowledge, &c.** "We count it reasonable to look to the Lord for our daily bread . . . but how few are they who seek for the same aid from Him in matters of the intellect, in learning, in study, in thought!"—*Atto*.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. "To be singular when the call of duty and faithfulness to God demand, is the evidence of true piety."

2. The teaching "When in Rome do as the Romans do," is not Bible teaching.—Duty is, like God, the same everywhere.

3. "Make the world bow to your religion; never let your religion bow to the world."—*Polakot*.

### THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

1. The book of *Jeremiah* differs from that of *Isaiah* in this respect, that while it was the leading object of *Isaiah* to attempt the reformation of the Jews, the awful nature of *Jeremiah's* message was to proclaim the near desolation of his country, now hardened in impenitence. This gives a peculiar feature, both to his character and writings, which has led to his being called "the weeping prophet" (see ix. 1). His name translated is, "He shall exhalt Jehovah."

2. *Jeremiah* was the son of *Hilkiah*, a priest of *Anathoth*, a small place in the tribe of *Benjamin*, not far from *Jerusalem*. Called to the prophetic office in the thirtieth year of *Josiah* (i. 2; xxv. 3), while he was yet a youth (l. 6), he prophesied under the reigns of *Josiah*, *Jehoaiah*, *Jehoiakim*, *Jehoiachin*, and *Zedekiah*. Some have thought that his father was the same *Hilkiah* the high priest who found the Book of the Law in the Temple, as is mentioned in 2 Kings xiii. and 2 Chron. xxxiv.; but this opinion is not held by the best critics. His personal history seems to have been sufficiently romantic. Unlike *Isaiah*, whose first appearance anticipated that of *Jeremiah* by about one hundred and thirty years, he weaves his own biography into the web of his prophecy. Thus, it would seem that he remained in his native village for several years, visiting, however, the

cities of *Judah*, for the purpose of announcing to the inhabitants the contents of the Book of the Law which had been found in the Temple; but that at length, probably in consequence of the persecution of his fellow-townsmen, and even of some members of his own family,—as well as, under the Divine direction, to take a wider field for his labours,—he left *Anathoth*, and came to *Jerusalem*. During the reign of *Josiah* he was, doubtless, a valuable coadjutor with that monarch in the reformation of religion. From his notice of *Isaiah*, or *Jehoaiah*, he probably suffered without hindrance during that monarch's brief reign. But when *Jehoiakim* came to the throne, he was interrupted in his ministry: the "priests and prophets" became his accusers, and demanded, in conjunction with the populace, because he had denounced woe against their city, that he should be put to death.<sup>1</sup> The princes did not dare to defy God thus openly; but *Jeremiah* was either placed under restraint, or deterred by his adversaries from appearing in public. Under these circumstances, he received a command from God to commit his predictions to writing.<sup>2</sup> Having done so, he sent *Burach*, his faithful friend and amanuensis, to read them to the people on a fast-day in the Temple. The princes advised *Jeremiah* and *Burach* to conceal themselves, while they tried to influence the king by reading the roll to him. But it was in vain: the reckless monarch, after hearing three or four pages, cut the roll in pieces, and cast it into the fire, giving immediate orders for the apprehension of *Jeremiah* and *Burach*. God, however, preserved them; and *Jeremiah* soon afterwards, by Divine direction, dictated the prophecies to *Baruch* again, and added others.<sup>3</sup>

4. During the short reign of the next king, *Jehoiachin*, we find the prophet still uttering the voice of warning, though yet without effect.<sup>5</sup> It was probably in the reign of *Jehoiachin* that *Pashur*, chief governor of the Temple, seized him and put him in the stocks, but released him the next day.<sup>6</sup>

5. Under *Zedekiah*, *Jeremiah* was often imprisoned. According to chap. xxxviii, he was consigned to a miry dungeon by the princes of the people; and though, by the king's command, he was delivered from that imprisonment, he was still kept in confinement till *Nebuchadnezzar*, who meantime had taken the city, released him, and gave him the choice of either going to *Babylon* or remaining in the country.<sup>7</sup> He preferred the latter alternative, and resided with *Gedaliah* at *Mizpah*. But when *Gedaliah* was murdered, he was forced to fly into *Egypt*.<sup>8</sup> In *Egypt* he still sought to turn the people to the Lord,<sup>9</sup> and predicted the approaching devastation of *Egypt* by *Nebuchadnezzar*.<sup>10</sup> He appears to have died in the fifth year after the destruction of *Jerusalem* (B. C. 583), in the very year *Nebuchadnezzar* came to *Egypt*—an event, however, which he did not live to see. According to a tradition, he was stoned to death by his countrymen at *Daphne*. His grave was subsequently pointed out at *Caïro*. In one of the apocryphal books of *Maccabees*, there are other traditions respecting him, all equally groundless.

6. *Jeremiah* was contemporary with *Zephaniah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*. His writings are in Hebrew, except the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which is in Chaldee; and those at least which relate to the seventy years of the Captivity were known to the prophet *Daniel*.<sup>11</sup> 7. The prophecies of this book evidently do not stand in chronological order; and it is not easy to reduce them to order of time, or to account for the present arrangement. In the Septuagint, the

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xli. 21; xlii. 6. <sup>2</sup> Jer. xxxi. 10-13. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. xxxvi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. xxxiii. The Jews to this day commemorate the burning of the roll by an annual fast.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Jer. xxii. 24-30 with 2 Kings xxiv. 12; see also Jer. xlii. 1-17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. xx. 1, etc. <sup>7</sup> Jer. xxxviii. xxxix. <sup>8</sup> Ibid. l. ix.-xliiii.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. xlv. 1 to Ibid. xliiii. 6-13. <sup>11</sup> Dan. ix. 2.

prophecies against foreign nations (xli.-li.) are inserted after chapter xxxv., and follow each other in a different course, whilst there are numerous omissions. The following order may perhaps be adopted:—

I.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of the good King *Josiah* (i.-xii.).

II.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of *Jehoiakim*, the eldest son of *Josiah* (xiii.-xx., xxi., xxiii., xxv., xxvii., xxxv., xlv., xlviii., xlix. 1-33).

III.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of *Zedekiah*, the uncle of *Jehoiachin*, the youngest son of *Josiah*, and the last of the kings of *Judah* (xli., xlv., xxvii.-xxxv., xxxvii.-xxxix., xlix. 34-39, l., li.).

IV.—The prophecies delivered during the government of *Gedaliah*, from the taking of *Jerusalem* to the retreat of the people into *Egypt*; and the prophecies delivered to the Jews in that country (xl.-xlv.).

Chap. lii. was added after *Jeremiah's* death. It is a short historical account of the taking of *Jerusalem*, and is properly an introduction to the book of *Lamentations*.

7. The writings of *Jeremiah* correspond with his character. They are peculiarly marked by pathos, and abound in expressions of tenderness, and in affecting descriptions of the miseries of the people.

8. As, in the days of *Jeremiah*, the Jewish nation had filled up the measure of their iniquities, the chief duty of this prophet was to expose the heinous sins of all classes of the people, and to denounce impending judgments. But these subjects, which take up the greater part of the book, and necessarily to give it a mournful aspect, are accompanied with some cheering declarations of God's merciful designs, both as to the restoration of the Jews from their captivity, and as to their future history. There are also a few bright pictures of the times of the Messiah, to whom this prophet repeatedly applies the designation which *Isaiah* had formerly given to Him,—the Branch.

9. It is not necessary to consider the attempts that have been made to dispute the genuineness of certain parts of *Jeremiah's* prophecies, since all such attempts rest, not on critical grounds, but on the denial of the reality of prophetic inspiration. Men who deny that *Isaiah* could foresee the restoration of the Jews from the *Babylonian Captivity*, may well deny also that *Jeremiah* could limit the duration of that Captivity to seventy years. But with those who believe that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," such arguments can have no weight. It is well known that *Jeremiah*, particularly in his prophecies against foreign nations, made use of earlier prophecies, as those of *Isaiah* and *Obadiah*.

#### References to Jeremiah in the New Testament.

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| Chap. vi. 16. Matt. xli. 29 | Chap. xxxi. 15. Matt. li. 17 |
| Mark xi. 13.                | 31-34. Heb. viii. 8.         |
| Mark xii. 13.               | 10: ix. 16, 17.              |
| Luke xii. 46.               |                              |
| 15: 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 9-31. |                              |

#### 3. THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

1. This book is a kind of appendix to the former one, of which, in the original Scriptures, it formed a part. The book consists of five chapters, or elegies. Each of these has twenty-two stanzas, or verses, beginning with the several letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the third chapter, having sixteen verses, has three verses together, each commencing in the Hebrew with the several letters in order.

2. As a composition, this book is remarkable for the great variety of pathetic images which it contains. The last chapter, or elegy, is in some versions entitled,—"The Prayer of *Jeremiah*."

—NEW COMPANION TO THE BIBLE.

1 Comp. Isa. xvi., xvi., with Jer. xlviii.; *Obadiah* with Jer. xlii. 7-9.