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Dear Associates and Friends,

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There are two articles this month. The first is "[Jeremiah, Part 4](#)," a prophetic article by Dr. Ernest L. Martin from December 1999, originally given as a taped lecture. The prophecies of Jeremiah are closely linked to the sabbatical years, both in the 70 years of exile as well as the 490 years expansion in Daniel chapter 9 given by Gabriel to Daniel. A proper chronological understanding of sabbatical years is essential to understanding New Testament time indicators that relate directly to Jeremiah and his prophecies.

The importance of Jeremiah's several writings is hard to overstate. Each one must be studied in its own right, and then compared with Jeremiah's other writings, synthesized where appropriate, and then compared with other writings from other periods and writings of the Bible. The axial nature of Jeremiah's writings is not only in prophecy and the tearing down of one civilization and building the foundations of another, it is also in the details of doctrine relating to the people of Israel, and how they were to behave and act after their return from exile.

Did you know that shortly before the Babylonians came to take Jerusalem, Jeremiah met with King Zedekiah, the last king of Judah? Here is what they talked about. Even at that late hour, God was willing to communicate to Zedekiah (who Jeremiah apparently liked) that God would not burn the Temple, and that Zedekiah along with his family would survive:

"Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, 'Thus says YHWH, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; if you will assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then [1] your soul shall live, and [2] this city shall not be burned with fire; and [3] you shall live, and [4] your house:

But if you will not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape out of their hand.'"

• Jeremiah 38:17-18

What a gracious and wonderful gift God offered to the king! Zedekiah was asked to trust God and surrender to Nebuchadnezzar (God's servant). Zedekiah could not accept it. Read Jeremiah 39:1-9 to learn what horrors happened to Zedekiah, his children, and his palace. Of course, we know from elsewhere that the Temple was sacked and burned to the ground. God will not be ignored.

"[The Book of Lamentations](#)" is the second article. It is a doctrinal article that analyzes this prophetic book. Written by the prophet Jeremiah, Lamentations is composed of five prophetic poems. I analyze the book for its teachings as an historical document and not for its future prophecies. It was prophetic in the past. Although the prophecies were fulfilled, there are aspects that still have prophetic significance for our future. But those future fulfillments are not the focus of my article. Dr. Martin said this about Lamentations:

"When Ezra the priest put together the Old Testament he put the book of Lamentations in the middle of four other books. Jeremiah wrote Lamentations with each chapter having elements of an acrostic to it. It had two books on either side in Ezra's canon of the Old Testament. Before Lamentations were the Song of Songs and the book of Ruth. On the other side were the book of Ecclesiastes and the book of Esther. In the middle of the Megilloth was the destruction book by Jeremiah — the Book of Lamentations."

• Dr. Ernest Martin, "[Jeremiah, Part 4](#)"

The terrible events prophesied in the Book of Jeremiah and fulfilled in Lamentations should cause us to consider what took place during the terrible siege and the events that followed. Here is an excerpt from an article, “Lamentations” from *Fausset’s Bible Dictionary*:

“Terse conciseness marks the style which Jeremiah suits to his theme, whereas he is diffuse in his prophecies. The elegies are grouped in stanzas, but without artificial arrangement of the thoughts. ... The young children fainting for hunger (Lamentations 2:6, 11–12, 20–21, 4:4, 9; 2 Kings 25:3), the city stormed (Lamentations 2:7, 4:12; 2 Chronicles 36:17, 19), the priests slain in the sanctuary, the citizens carried captive (Lamentations 1:5, 2:9; 2 Kings 25:11) with the king and princes, the feasts, sabbaths, and the law no more (Lamentations 1:4, 2:6), all point to Jerusalem’s capture by Nebuchadnezzar.”

• **“Lamentations”**

As I point out in the article, the 5-fold structure of Lamentations by Jeremiah should be viewed as a fulfillment of the warnings Moses gave to Israel in Deuteronomy 32:22–26. Moses there presents 5-fold punishments increasing in intensity if the people of Israel continued to disobey the rules of the covenant they entered into with YHWH at Mount Sinai. These Mosaic punishments are closely fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah, as shown in the Book of Lamentations.¹

New Map of the End-Times Middle East

Henry Dye has created a new graphic map of the Middle East based on Psalm 83 and he has graciously allowed us to use it. I note Dr. Martin’s analysis of Psalm 83 in the text of my April 15, 2012 Commentary [“The Future of Syria.”](#) There I have replaced the original map (which is also in two other ASK articles) with this clearer graphic by Mr. Dye. Remember, Psalm 83 gives us a “snapshot” of the future situation in the Middle East just before Christ returns. The geopolitical situation and borders will continue to be different from that “snapshot” right up to the time when suddenly everything will “fit” God’s plan.

Thank You

We feel blessed as we try to help you grow in grace and in knowledge. Many of you are kind enough to communicate with us that you are learning much. Learning is not easy. (Remember King Zedekiah! or the people of Jerusalem, those who survived!) Sometimes God gives us hard lessons. People in the Bible are even given deadly lessons so others can learn. Remember that the entire Old Testament is for us.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

• ***Romans 15:4***

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

• ***1 Corinthians 10:11–12***

Zedekiah will be resurrected and taught the truths of God, as will his family. He will be saved through Christ, as will each of those killed at Jerusalem, as well as those who survived and lived in emotional pain for the rest of their lives. God will heal them all. God will heal your pain. Read God’s Word, study, study, study, and as Paul says, **“have hope.”** Thank you for your financial support, your comments, and especially for your prayers to God. Someday we will appreciate their true power (James 5:16).

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¹ See Dr. Martin’s [“Introduction to Isaiah”](#) that goes deeper into this understanding. The 5-fold structure occurs often in Scripture, and most of those relate to other 5-fold structures. This is another instance of intertextuality within Scripture.