



## Case Study: Jeremiah

Read the text assigned to your group and respond to the questions together. Each group will summarize their text and share their learning with the entire lab.

### 1. The Call 1:1-19

- What do you learn about Jeremiah's personality from the call?
- How does God communicate with Jeremiah?
- Is this an ecstatic moment when Jeremiah loses consciousness or is he rooted in reality during the call from God?

### 2. The Message 5:1-31

- What are the sins of Judah?
- How widespread is the immorality?
- What do you learn about the organization of society in Judah from chap. 5?
- What did the Judeans learn from the destruction of Israel at the hands of Assyria in 722 BCE?
- What will happen to Judah as a result of their sins?
- Is there any way that Judah can escape the fate Jeremiah describes in verses 14-17?

### 3. The Message 29: 1-14 (After the destruction of the Temple and the exile)

- What is the message Jeremiah gives to the remnant of Judah and why?
- What's the warning to the Jews in captivity?
- The beginning of this chapter details how the letter arrived in Babylon—why do you think it's included here?
- What's the feeling Jeremiah is trying to imbue within the exiled community?

### 4. Jeremiah's Art-- Language of Poetry: Chapter 5, 6, 30:1-9

- What poetic devices does Jeremiah employ?
- How effective do you think his language would be?
- Aside from poetry, what are other literary devices you notice in these two chapters?
- Do you consider his words an art form?
- In chapters 30 and 36, Jeremiah switches from oral to written message at God's request. Why the switch?

**5. Language of Allegory: Chapter 13:1-11 and 18:1-12, 30:1-9**

- What's the meaning of each allegory?
- Why use an allegory to transmit one's message?
- Who is delivering the message and who's receiving it?
- Do you think an allegory would work for Jeremiah to speak to the nation of Judah?
- In chapters 30 and 36, Jeremiah switches from oral to written message at God's request. Why the switch?
- If you have time, scan chapters 27 and 28. How does Jeremiah become a human allegory? Could you view this as a form of performance art?

**6. Reaction of the King, the Priests, and the People to Jeremiah's prophecies**

**Jeremiah 18:18-23, 20:1-2, 7-10, 26:4-19, 32:1-5, 38:1-28, 39:11-14**

- How do the various kings react to Jeremiah's prophecies of doom and condemnation?
- Who are the people who rescue Jeremiah?
- How great was the danger to Jeremiah when he spoke God's words?
- The Babylonian king protected Jeremiah. Do you think that placed him in danger or saved him? (39)

**7. Who is the inner Jeremiah?**

**Jeremiah 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21, 20:7-18**

- How would you describe the inner Jeremiah? What range of emotions can you discern from the verses.
- What do you think the personal cost was to Jeremiah for serving as God's prophet?
- Abraham Joshua Heschel calls the prophets "morally maladjusted." What do you think he means and how does this affect the inner Jeremiah?
- There is a tradition among early 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian Bible scholars of deeming the prophets to be mad. Some scholars diagnose the various prophets, e.g. according to E.C. Broome, Ezekiel was a paranoid schizophrenic. How do you respond to those who turn to a psychological diagnosis?

**Do you express your anger, dismay, moral outrage, and visions of the future in your art?**

**How?**