

## 23.08 Jeremiah, Pashur, and Discouragement (Jeremiah 27:1, 2; 19; 20)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that will not be read aloud; they also show answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Check “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional materials needed. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- a wooden yoke; if unavailable, use a substitute block of wood or make one from styrofoam® covered with wood-grain Contact® paper; make it big enough for the teacher to wear throughout this lesson, or show a picture of a yoke
- clay bottle or an old clay flower pot to break; bring some newspaper or a plastic sheet to contain the pieces as you break the vessel during the story.

### Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:

- *yoke*: a wooden beam used to connect two or more cows or oxen to control them in order to pull something such as a cart or plow. Being “under the yoke” was symbolic of being controlled by another, as Judah was under the control of Nebuchadnezzar.
- *Tophet/Valley of the Sons of Hinnom* [locate]: This valley lay from northwest to southeast on the southwest side of Jerusalem. It is the place where wicked kings and people sacrificed innocent lives to false gods. Therefore, King Josiah, when he attempted to destroy false worship, made this valley even more despicable by scattering human bones in it. After that, the valley became a kind of sewer or garbage dump for the waste of the city. Fires burned waste there continually. Jesus later used this valley as a picture of hell, where the fire is never put out.
- *clay containers*: If a clay vessel was broken in Bible times, it might as well be thrown away, for it couldn’t be restored to usefulness.
- *stocks*: wooden beams designed to hold legs, arms, and sometimes heads so that a person could not move

### Scripture: (ESV)

Jeremiah 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord. 2 Thus the Lord said to me: “Make yourself straps and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck.

19:1 Thus says the Lord, “Go, buy a potter’s earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, 2 and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. 3 You shall say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. 4 Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, 5 and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind— 6 therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7 And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. 8 And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. 9 And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege

and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.’

10 “Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth because there will be no place else to bury. 12 Thus will I do to this place, declares the Lord, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. 13 The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah—all the houses on whose roofs offerings have been offered to all the host of heaven, and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods—shall be defiled like the place of Topheth.’”

14 Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the Lord’s house and said to all the people: 15 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I am bringing upon this city and upon all its towns all the disaster that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words.”

20:1 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. 2 Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the Lord. 3 The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. 4 For thus says the Lord: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall strike them down with the sword. 5 Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city, all its gains, all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them and seize them and carry them to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. To Babylon you shall go, and there you shall die, and there you shall be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.”

7 O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. 8 For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. 9 If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. 10 For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! “Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” say all my close friends, watching for my fall. “Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.” 11 But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. 12 O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

13 Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers. 14 Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! 15 Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, “A son is born to you,” making him very glad. 16 Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew without pity; let him hear a cry in the morning and an alarm at noon, 17 because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever great. 18 Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?

### **Outline:**

Jeremiah’s word from God:

Wear yoke (people under the yoke of Babylon)

Preach in the Valley of Hinnom (of Slaughter), taking older priests and men (Jerusalem to be destroyed)

Take clay bottle and break it (God would break Jerusalem never to be mended)

Preach in Temple court same message

Pashur's false word:

Put Jeremiah in stocks by Temple court

Named “Terror on Every Side”; would be carried to Babylon

Jeremiah's self-pity:

Unpopular message; banned from Temple; had to hide from Jehoiakim

"Your word is a for me a reproach and derision every single day. No more. Wish I hadn't been born!"

God's Word like a fire that had to be preached

Prayed for downfall of his enemies

### **Introduction/Review:**

Jeremiah had prophesied for at least 30 years. He had started as a young man while good King Josiah was king. He certainly had had more work to do while Jehoiakim was king, for Jehoiakim was very wicked. So was Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, who ruled only three months before surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar and going to Babylon with his family and officers. The curse upon Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin—that they would have no one to rule on the throne of David—was coming to pass.

### **Story:**

During Jehoiakim's rule God had given a strange command to Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> This was the command: "Make yourself straps and yoke bars, and put them around your neck." As God said, Jeremiah made the yoke and put it around his neck. Why did God want Jeremiah to do this strange thing? It was because his wearing this yoke would show the people that Judah would be under the "yoke" (control) of Babylon. Next week's story will tell us more about this yoke. Today, I will wear this fake yoke I made just to show you how strange Jeremiah must have seemed to those who saw him.

To us another strange command was for Jeremiah to go to the Valley of Hinnom to preach. What!?! Go to the sewer/garbage dump to preach? Yes. God said, "Take a clay bottle with you and the older priests and some older men, and go to the Valley of Hinnom to proclaim My word." What do you suppose was God's message at this stinky place? What had God's message through Jeremiah been in the Temple court? [Destruction of Jerusalem because the people worshiped false idols.] Now that I think of it, this is the perfect place for Jeremiah to predict the destruction of Jerusalem, for this is the very place where the people had practiced their abominable worship.

Sure enough, Jeremiah said, "Because you served other gods and slew many innocent ones in this place, this valley will be called The Valley of Slaughter, for here many will die by the sword of the enemy. This city will be a horror, a place at which to hiss [demonstrate a hiss or whistle] in disgust." Why would people hiss or whistle when they looked upon destroyed Jerusalem? [Because of its great fall and disgusting result.]

What about the clay bottle? God had a command regarding it too. "Break the clay bottle in the sight of all the men who go with you. Then say, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city as one breaks a clay vessel so that it can never be mended. The only place to bury the dead will be this valley. In fact, the city will be like Tophet, this Valley called Hinnom: the houses, even the king's house, where sacrifices to idols were offered will be defiled just like this place.'"

What a dreadful prophecy, spoken in that dreadful environment of fire, smoke, and stench.

When Jeremiah was done prophesying at Tophet, he departed to the court of the Temple and preached the same message there: "Thus says the God of Israel, 'I am bringing upon this city and its area all the disaster that I have pronounced against it because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words.'"

One of the men at the temple who heard Jeremiah's message was named Pashur, who was in charge of taking care of the Temple. Now, imagine that you were he—the priest in charge of keeping the Temple. You didn't like Jeremiah, nor did you believe a word Jeremiah said. In fact, you had prophesied yourself that all would be well and Jerusalem would be safe. I wonder what you would do.

I do know what Pashur did. He didn't like Jeremiah and his yoke. He didn't like what Jeremiah said in "his" Temple. He decided he would take care of this fool, Jeremiah: he would put Jeremiah in stocks. And that's what he did.

✓“Get your arms and legs in these slots, Jeremiah,” he might have said. “I’ll teach you not to preach against this Temple and this city! Somebody needs to teach you a thing or two. Now, stay there until I let you go!” So there, right by the gate to the Temple court where people could see him, Jeremiah sat in the stocks all that night.

The next day, when Pashur came back to release Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah had some words for *him* from the Lord. “The Lord does not call your name Pashur, but Terror on Every Side.” “Terror on every side” means being afraid of every little thing. Is it pleasant to live in fear—worry that something bad will happen to you? No. But that’s what would happen to Pashur: he would be fearful all the time because he had put Jeremiah into the stocks when Jeremiah had proclaimed God’s Word.

God had more to say about Pashur. Listen. “For thus says the Lord: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon; he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. Moreover, I will give all the wealth of the city . . . all its prized belongings, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into the hand of their enemies, who shall . . . carry them to Babylon. And you, Pashur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go to Babylon; and there you shall die and be buried, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied falsely.”

✓I’m sure Pashur didn’t enjoy hearing these words. I’m sure Pashur didn’t enjoy being fearful of every little thing from that time on. And I’m sure Pashur didn’t enjoy being taken to Babylon later.

Even though Jeremiah had boldly proclaimed all these words to Pashur and all the prophecies at the garbage dump in the valley and at the Temple, Jeremiah began to feel sorry for himself. Sometimes God’s servants get discouraged. Even Jeremiah, God’s prophet, got discouraged. God had given him very difficult things to say—things no one wanted to hear, things about death and destruction. Jeremiah had been banned from the Temple. He had had to hide from King Jehoiakim. ✓People had made fun of him for wearing the yoke. They believed the false prophets who said everything would be all right. They didn’t want to listen to his message from God about destruction.

Jeremiah had had enough. He was ready to quit. “Everyone laughs at me and makes fun of me!” he said. “Whenever I speak, I cry out. I shout, ‘Violence and destruction!’ Nobody believes me! God, Your word has become for me a reproach and derision every single day. I’ve decided I am not going to mention Your name or speak any more about You. I hear people whispering about ‘terror being on every side,’ just as I told Pashur. Even my close friends say they don’t want anything to do with me. They are waiting for me to sin so that my message will not be received. Oh, I wish I had never been born!”

Sometimes it just seems easier to quit. Jeremiah was at that point. But would it have been right for him to quit? No. Why not? Because God had called him to tell the people these difficult but truthful things. He needed to obey God even if it was hard.

Thankfully, Jeremiah’s thoughts changed; he mused, “God has given me His word. It’s inside me, It feels almost like a fire inside me. I want to quit. I don’t want to be mocked, but I’ve just *got* to tell the people what God has said! I can’t quit!”

Although Jeremiah did complain a lot more, he also looked to the Lord and gave Him praise. Here is what he said: “The LORD is with me like a dread warrior; therefore, my persecutors will stumble, they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten” (Jeremiah 20:11). He knew God was on his side and his enemies, not he, would stumble.

Then he prayed for the downfall of his enemies: “O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see Your vengeance upon them, for to You have I committed my cause.”

We will learn that God will answer Jeremiah’s prayer and take vengeance on Jeremiah’s enemies. Jeremiah knew the answer was as good as already done, for he said, “Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.”

I'm so glad that Jeremiah didn't give up, for he had many more things to say. He had some near prophecies, some prophecies about Jesus, and some prophecies that haven't yet been fulfilled. Many of the verses in his book are a great blessing to us today.

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<sup>1</sup>Note: some say this command was given during Zedekiah's reign; in fact, the ESV reads so. John Gill concludes "that the prophet, in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, made the yokes as he was ordered, and put one on his neck, to signify the subjection of Judah to the king of Babylon, which quickly took place, about the third or fourth year of this reign; and that the rest were sent to the ambassadors of the neighbouring nations in Zedekiah's time; which latter seems most probable." Gill gives other probabilities in his commentary ([Jeremiah 27:1 - Bible Verse Meaning and Commentary \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)).

### Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:  
Do you suppose Jesus dreaded going to the cross enough that He wanted to quit before that event? Being sinless, He would not quit, but He did say, "Let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but Thine [the Father's] will be done." He finished what He had come to do, even though it was dreadful.
- If God calls you to do something, do it even if it is difficult. It is more important to please God than to please people.
- Don't quit. Go to the Lord for strength.

### Activities:

- Play dough: yoke; ox or cow
- Snack: Using the idea at the site [Reindeer Pretzels - The Country Cook](#), make a face with a smaller nose to resemble a person. Put it on the opposite end of the pretzel where the pretzel crisscrosses and turn the face the other way so that the loops of the pretzel look as if they are coming down like Jeremiah's yoke.
- Sing Bill Harvey's song, "Opportunity," found below.
- Pretend to be in stocks, sitting with legs and arms stretched out.
- Review questions: (Game: A student who answers a question correctly "gets" to wear the teacher's yoke.)
  1. God told Jeremiah to put what around his neck? [A yoke.]
  2. Where did Jeremiah go to preach about Jerusalem's destruction? [At the Valley of Hinnom; the garbage dump of the city.]
  3. What did Jeremiah preach when he went to the Temple courtyard? Was his message different there than it was at the Valley of Hinnom? [No, it was not different; he continued to preach about coming judgment and destruction.]
  4. What did Pashur, the Temple keeper who didn't like Jeremiah's message, do to Jeremiah? [Put him in stocks overnight.]
  5. What did God say would happen to Pashur? [He would be afraid of every little thing; he would be taken to Babylon along with his family and friends.]
  6. Why did Jeremiah want to quit preaching God's word? [Because he was mocked and harassed and made to be a fool.]
  7. Why did Jeremiah have to continue preaching God's word? [Because it was like a fire inside; he had to preach because God had told him to do so.]

### Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- Psalm 1 (The KJV has visuals at [psalm 1 - Bing images](#) words only, and [Tree & Psalm 1 - Openclipart](#)

with a tree in the picture. The ESV has one at [\(840\) Pinterest](#) with a lamp and a Bible in the picture.)

**1** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**2** but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**3** He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

**4** The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

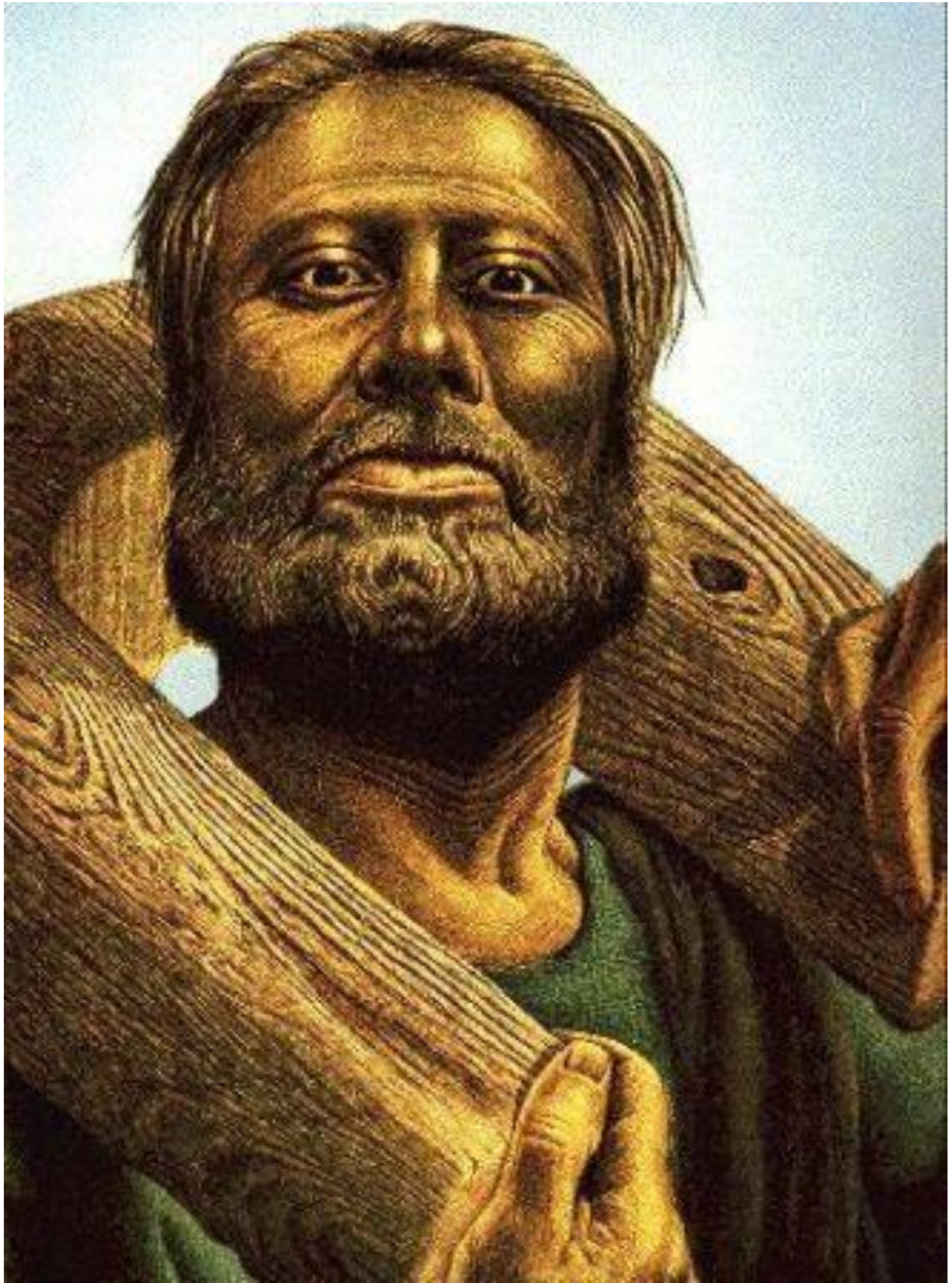
**5** Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

**6** for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

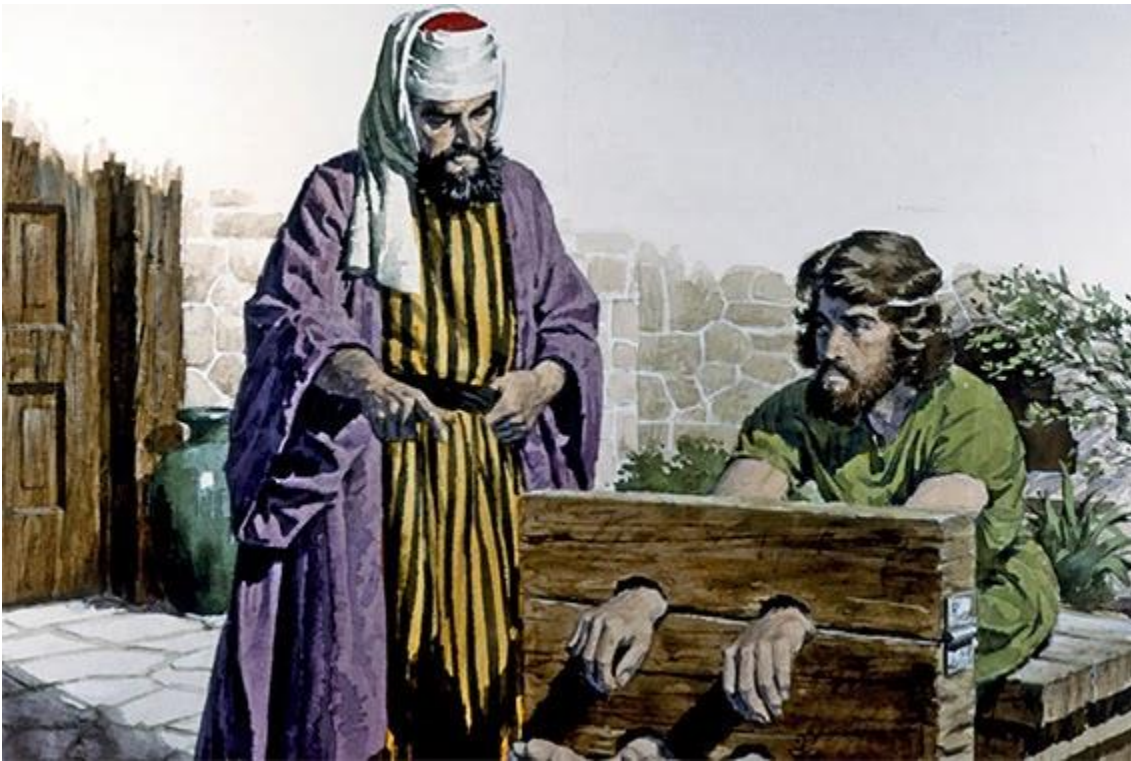
**Handwork:**

- Print the page below with a clipart yoke for each student. Students will color the yoke and read the words printed on the page.
- Or cut a simple *U* shape one inch wide and 4-5 inches tall out of Contact paper that has a wood grain. Students can remove the backing, place the “yoke” on a piece of paper, and write the work *yoke* above it.





Painting by Guy Rowe



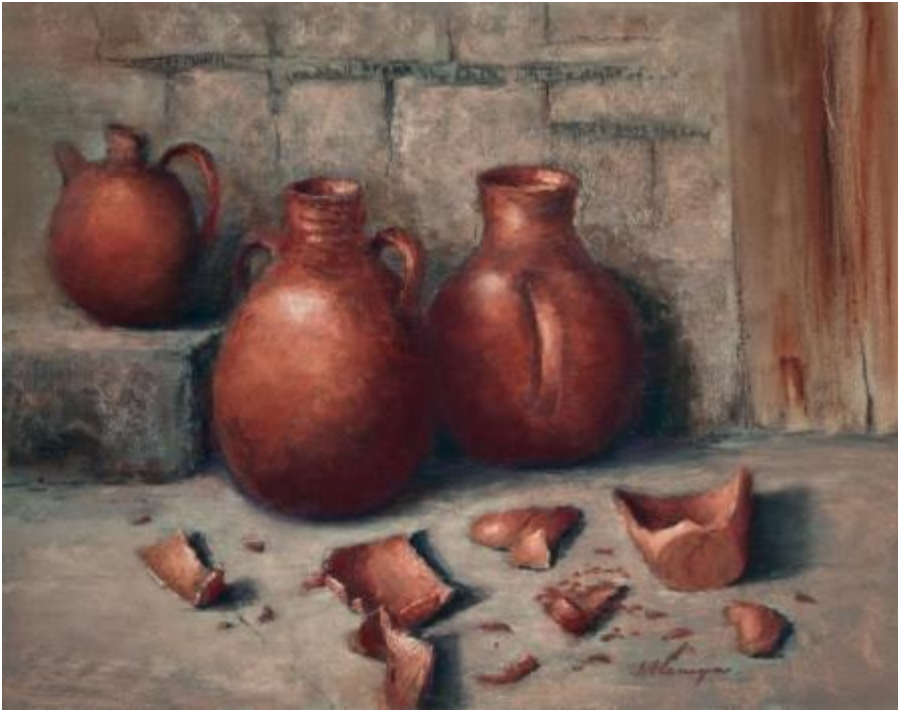
[preachbrotherbob: Incredible Revelations About The Bible](#)



Bible History Online

[jer20-stocks.jpg \(614x239\) \(wordpress.com\)](#)

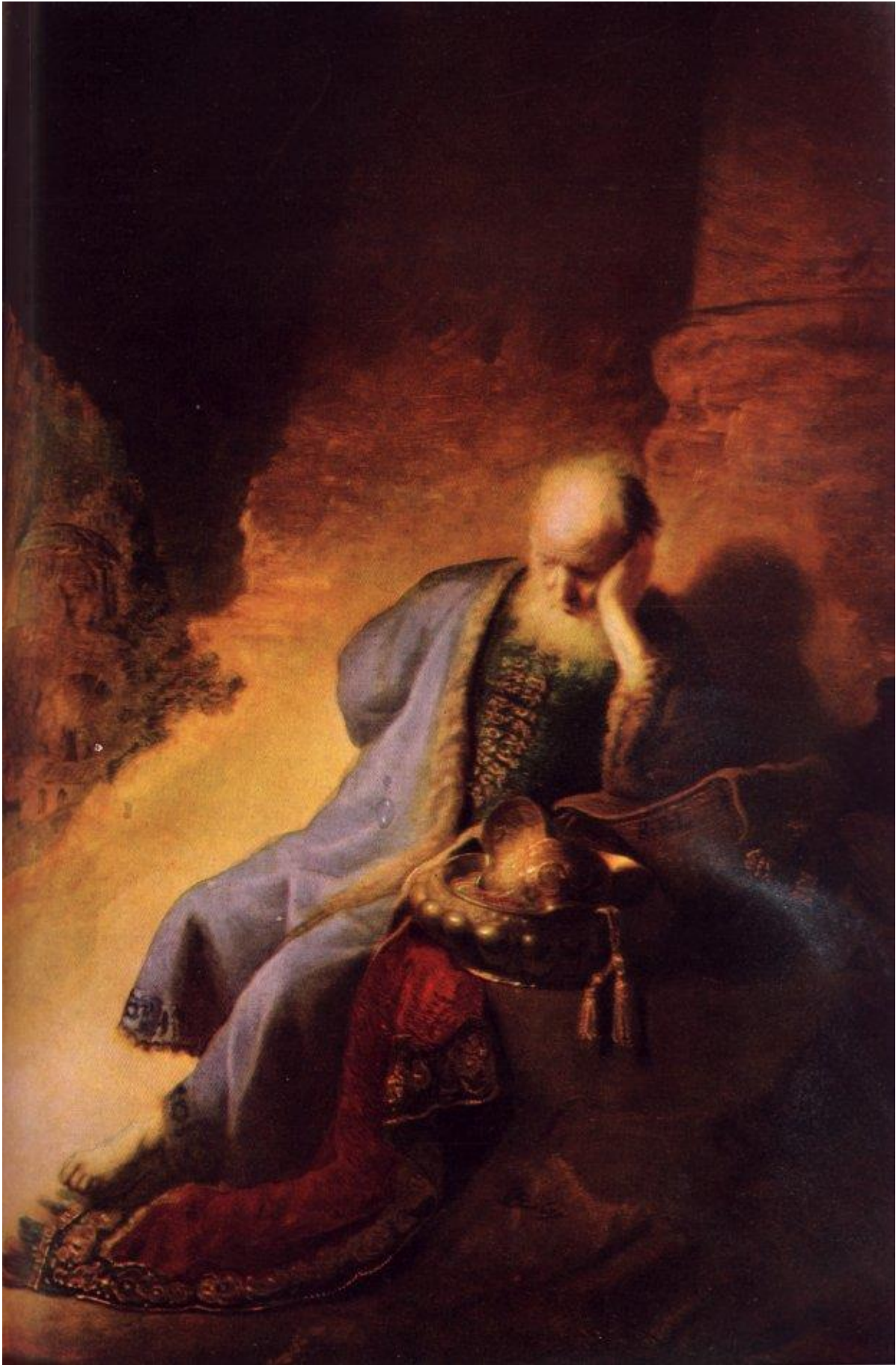




“Jeremiah 19 The Broken Flask” by Sue Flanagan [June | 2013 | DWELLING in the Word \(wordpress.com\)](#)



[broken things images \(pinterest.com\)](#)



from Wikipedia





from michaelangelo's sistine chapel









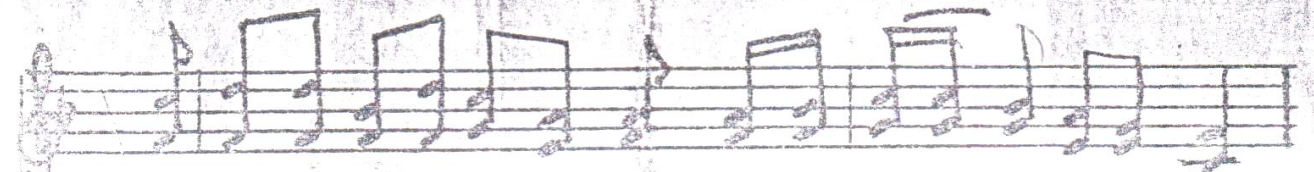
# "OPPORTUNITY"

(WHY COMPLAIN ABOUT THE PROBLEM?)

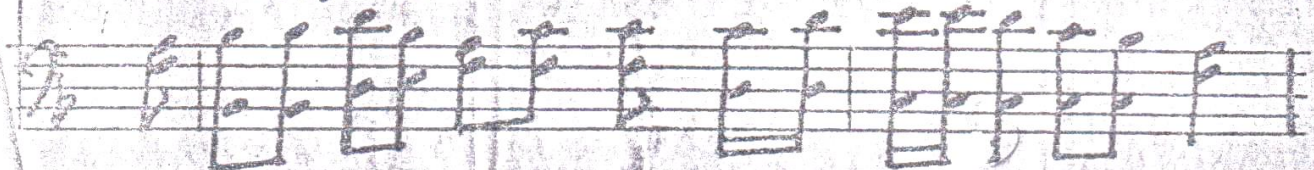
Words and Music by  
Bill Harvey



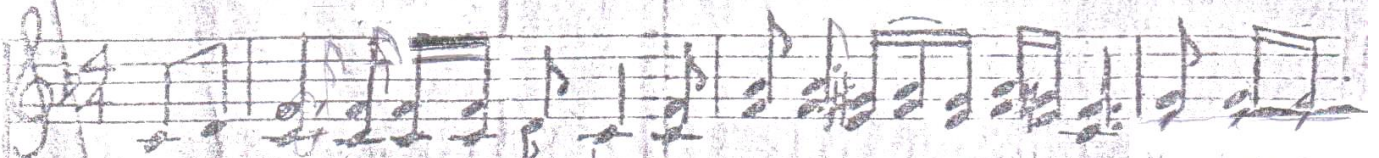
Your prob - lem is a com - pli - ment, Tai - lored and just your size.  
The prob - lem you will solve to - day Sure - ly will come a - gain.  
The fric - tion is for pol - ish - ing, Pres - sure, a wor - thy test,



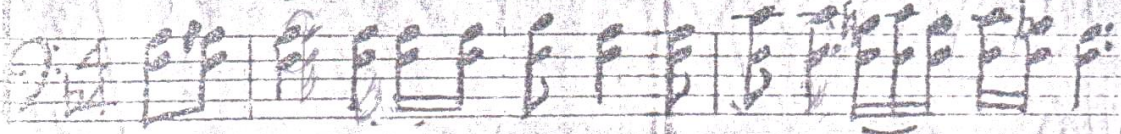
It may well be a hea - ven - sent Op - por - tu - ni - ty in dis - guise.  
— Count it joy and you will say You are glad you had it then.  
— Pro - bing and re - veal - ing Our weak - ness and our best.



## Chorus



Why com - plain a - bout the prob - lem? Re - joice in the op - por - tu - ni - ty. You have a





chance to grow in grace... Take hold of re-spon-si-bil-i-ty. The re-

ward is worth the suf-fer-ing; There's glo-ry some sweet day. Praise

God for the prob-blems on your way.

Repeat last time.

