

- 6 *Jeremiah 18-19*
Jeremiah uses the image of a clay pot being moulded and re-moulded by the God who is continually shaping us. Is this a helpful image for you personally? Are we ever in any sense ‘finished’ or ‘complete’?
- 7 *Jeremiah 20*
“I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me” (v.7). Does it matter if preachers are ‘heard’?
- 8 *Jeremiah 23*
“The prophets ... speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise me, ‘The Lord says, you will have peace.’ And to all who follow the stubbornness of their own hearts they say, ‘No harm will come to you.’ But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or hear his word?” (vv.16-18). These are challenging words, but how do we discern whether they apply to the preaching we hear in our own churches?
- 6 *Jeremiah 29*
“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (v.11). This is one of the best-known and most loved verses in *Jeremiah*, but do you believe that God has a plan for *you*? How do you discern what it is? Has it changed over the years?
- 10 *Jeremiah 30*
What are the hopes and perspectives that sustain you when life is all rather a struggle?

Closing

Reflect on the discussion you’ve had, and pray for God’s help in addressing specific matters that have arisen. Close with the Grace.

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 10

Opening Prayers

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
the distant scene; one step enough for me.

(John Henry Newman, 1801-1890)

O Father God,
I cannot fight this darkness by beating it with my hands,
Help me to take the light of Christ right into it.

(A Prayer from Africa)

General Questions

1 This month has been a bit different, certainly compared with Luke's gospel last month!

So how have you found it?
Has it been a bit of a struggle to keep going?
Have you discerned any relevance at all from what you have read for the world of today?

Activity

Try to find a way of projecting or viewing the Rembrandt painting *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem* (1630), which is on display in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum. Downcast, the prophet leans his tired head on his hands grieving over the fall of the city that he loves; a fall that he had prophesied.
As you gaze at the painting, what do you see?
Do you find it changes at all how you view Jeremiah?

Further Ideas

As usual, the intention is not necessarily to work through all of these ideas, just to take on some of them as the group chooses.

1 *Jeremiah 1-30*

A key theme running through the notes has been to try to unravel what are the marks of a 'true' prophet. That is, one who is genuinely speaking on behalf of God, rather than on behalf of himself (or herself).

From what you've read, then, how can you tell a 'true' prophet from a 'false' one?

2 *Jeremiah 1-30*

And what about Jeremiah the man?
Is he a character you warm to? Or would he be someone you'd probably avoid if you met him at a party?

3 *Jeremiah 6*

"Ask for the ancient paths" (v.16). Is this a comforting, refreshing image, or does it seem boring – carrying a sense perhaps that our generation is not 'moving on'?

4 *Jeremiah 8 (amongst other chapters)*

Jeremiah wears his heart on his sleeve. As well as being a prophetic voice he appears to have a pastoral heart.

Someone leading a retreat I once attended argued that church leaders could either be prophets / evangelists (gifted in proclaiming God's word) or pastors (who cared deeply for their flock), but they couldn't be both. Is he right?

5 *Jeremiah 16*

Is there a tendency for us to emphasise 'love' and 'tolerance' (see the story of the sage in the notes) rather than talk about 'sin' and 'judgment'?