***Jeremiah 25:1-14 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 3“From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. 4And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. 5They said, ‘Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. 6Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.’ 7Yet you have not listened to Me,” says the Lord, “that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. 8“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, 9behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the Lord, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. 14(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)’***

Tonight, we’re with Jeremiah, as God provides a prophecy concerning the seventy years of desolation. Of course, we remember that this prophecy was fulfilled and we studied this is Daniel 9:1-2 - *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans -****2****in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.* Isn’t it amazing to see that the word that Jeremiah speaks here is confirmed by the prophet Daniel! Daniel has studied the books of Jeremiah, he has studied this prophecy and others like it and understands the seventy years will soon be fulfilled. What God ordains will be accomplished.

Verse 1 *The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon).* Several major events happen in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. The Egyptians are defeated at Carchemish (which is in Syria). 2 Chronicles 35:20 tells us that King Josiah was killed near here in the Valley of Megiddo by Necho. Jeremiah 46:2 tells us that Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho at Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim – the same year as this prophecy. Also, in this same year, Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians and Jehoiakim was made a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim paid tribute and Jerusalem was sacked of treasures. Likely, this prophecy came to Jeremiah very early in the year, as verse 9 suggests that Nebuchadnezzar is just starting his journey to Syria, where Carchemish is located. As we studied last evening service, Jeremiah 24 took place in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, which means that this prophecy came seven years before Jeconiah was carried into captivity – so the prophecy of chapter 25 came to Jeremiah seven years before the vision of chapter 24. The Jewish calculations of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign started when Nebuchadnezzar first started co ruling with his father. The Babylonians didn’t consider him ruler until the death of his father two years later. Regardless, this is another example of God sending specific names long before the person is known to history. As with Cyrus, God names names many years before the prophecy takes place.

Verses 2-3 *Which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 3“From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened.* The word that Jeremiah is bringing from the Lord concerns all the people – not just the kings or the priests – but all the people. Therefore, he spoke these words to the general public wherever he spoke. From the thirteenth year of Josiah, which Jeremiah 1:2 tells us is the very first year Jeremiah started to prophesy. Josiah reigned 31 years, so 19 years of this 23 have been with Josiah. Then add four for the reign of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah has been a preacher and a prophet to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He has risen early and been diligent. He has not been lazy or lax. He has spoken truth early and often. He has been very attentive to be sure that he discharged the office and the duty that God called him to faithfully. Likewise, we must be attentive and faithful to discharge the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ when He tells us to witness, teach, and baptize. Too often, comfort takes our attention from Christ. We must be diligent like Jeremiah, rising early, working late, to reach all the souls for Jesus we come in contact with.

Verses 4-7 *And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. 5They said, ‘Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. 6Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.’ 7Yet you have not listened to Me,” says the Lord, “that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.* Jeremiah was rising early and working diligently, but he reminds the people that he is not the only one that God sent. Ezekiel, Daniel, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk were all contemporaries of Jeremiah, and they were all saying the same thing from God, but the people would not listen, nor incline their ear. This demonstrates not just ignorance or passive resistance, but open contempt for the Lord. We see the same thing today for God’s messengers in many places. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 says *And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.****16****But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.* The call is very, very consistent – repent and stop your evil ways. Do not go after other gods. Do not provoke God to anger. God will be merciful and graceful if they will only turn. Doctrine has not changed and neither has the contempt for that doctrine and the rebellion against God. Yet, you have not heard Me through any of the prophets. You have not obeyed the call. The disobedience has the sense that the rebellion is designed to draw the wrath of God – like a disobedient child being willfully disobedient to parents. Yet, all of this is to the hurt of the people. We cannot hurt Almighty God with our sinful actions. We only hurt ourselves when we act in a way to spoil our fellowship with God. Likewise, the people of Judah and Jerusalem have only hurt themselves.

Verses 8-9 “*Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, 9behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the Lord, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.* Therefore – God now gives the because. Because you have not heard My words, there will be consequences. Any of us who have raised children know that there comes a time when disobedience meets consequences. Small disobedience, small consequences. Big disobedience, long drawn out, willful disobedience – large consequences. Verse 9 – the Babylonians had an alliance of several kingdoms to the north of Judea, Nebuchadnezzar being the leader of this alliance. He is called God’s servant here – God uses many tools to bring judgement upon nations. God will bring the armies against the land and deprive Judah and Jerusalem of all hope. Judah and Jerusalem will be utterly destroyed. And will become an astonishment and a hissing among the traders from other nations passing by. It will be a place of utter and perpetual (the Hebrew has the idea of a remarkably long duration of time) desolation.

Verse 10 *Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.* In Jeremiah 7:34 and Jeremiah 16:9, we studied the voice of mirth and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom not being heard. The sound of millstones and light of candles, meaning that trade and everyday actions of life will disappear and be dispersed. The interesting thing noted here by several theologians is that grinding at the millstone was traditionally a morning activity. Candles are used for illumination in the evening. This carries the idea that the desolation and quiet will be all day everyday. There will be gloom and no joy.

Verse 11 *And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.* The whole land will serve Babylon for seventy years. This covers from the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish until the Medes and Persians conquer Babylon and Cyrus assumes the throne and Darius takes the area including Babylon and Judah.

Verse 12 *‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. 14(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)’* God uses the pride and selfish ambitions of Babylon as a tool to bring His people back into obedience, but He will not allow the pride and selfish ambition of the pagan king to go unpunished. Sin will be punished. Nebuchadnezzar lusted for power and did cruel things in this pursuit. Babylon was a nation of iniquity including false gods, luxury, tyranny, and idolatries. The power of the Chaldeans was broken when the Medes and Persians conquered it. Never again were they the seat of power as before. God will repay all nations that attack His people.

So, we will leave Jeremiah tonight, as he continues to deliver the prophecies faithfully to the people. God sees Jeremiah’s faithfulness and the faithlessness of the people listening to him as he speaks in the public square to all people. Theologians have written entire books on the kings that ruled through the timeline of the seventy years of captivity. God named seventy years and that is exactly how long the people served the king of Babylon. God speaks the word, and His word will not return void. It will all be perfectly accomplished. As we look at the prophecies that are still to come, we can rest in confidence that God has spoken it, and it will be accomplished. Jesus told us He would come again, and we look with great hope every day knowing He will one day appear. Until that time, let’s be about faithfully witnessing to all that will hear, knowing that many will not listen and will show great contempt for us as followers of Christ. Jesus told us the world first hated Him, so it will surely hate us. But He has overcome the world, and, through Him, and by the power of Almighty God, we will overcome as well.