

Dr. Gary Yates, Jeremiah, Session 16, Confessions: Pathos of the People Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

16, Confessions: Pathos of the People

1. Abstract of Yates, Jeremiah, Session 16, Confessions: Pathos of the People, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Gary Yates **analyzes Jeremiah's confessions** in chapters 11-20. It **examines how these confessions reveal both God's and Jeremiah's pain**, relating them to the suffering of the Israelites. The lecture **draws parallels between Jeremiah's experiences and those of Moses and Elijah**, highlighting the difficulties of prophetic ministry. Further, it **posits Jeremiah's confessions as models for prayer** for the exiled Israelites, emphasizing their role in expressing both individual and communal suffering. Finally, the lecture **connects Jeremiah's laments to the book of Lamentations**, showcasing their enduring relevance.

2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 16 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Jeremiah).



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3. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 16, Confessions: Pathos of the People

Jeremiah's Confessions: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to the lecture, how has Jeremiah become the word of God?
2. What dual role does Jeremiah fulfill as a mediator in the context of his confessions?
3. What does the *inclusio*, referencing Jeremiah 1:5 and 20:18, illustrate about the prophet's calling and experience?
4. How does Moses' experience in Numbers 11 and 20 relate to Jeremiah's struggles as a prophet?
5. In Jeremiah's first lament (chapter 11), what is his initial complaint and what is God's response?
6. How does God respond differently to Jeremiah's second lament in chapter 12 compared to the first?
7. What is the significance of the word *shub* in God's response to Jeremiah's third lament in chapter 15?
8. How do Jeremiah's laments in chapters 17, 18, and 20 differ from the earlier ones (chapters 11, 12, and 15)?
9. How do the prayers and laments in the book of Jeremiah become a model for the exiles?
10. What three ways does the lecture describe the function and meaning of Jeremiah's confessions?

Answer Key

1. Jeremiah becomes the word of God not only through his spoken prophecies but also through his very life and person. His actions and experiences embody God's message, making it concrete and immediate to those who hear and see it.
2. As a mediator, Jeremiah represents God before the people by communicating God's anger and grief, but he also represents the people before God by expressing

their suffering and anguish. He stands between God and Israel, seeking understanding between the two.

3. The *inclusio* highlights the difficult nature of ministry. Jeremiah is called by God from the womb, but later, at the height of his suffering, wishes he had never been born, demonstrating the challenging and potentially toxic aspects of prophetic ministry.
4. Like Jeremiah, Moses experienced frustration and despair while leading the Israelites, questioning God's plan and his own role. His frustrations highlight the isolating nature of leadership and the potential for a fragmented relationship with God.
5. In the first lament, Jeremiah complains that he was unaware of the plots against his life and he prays for God's vengeance. God's response is to promise punishment for those in his hometown who seek his life.
6. In response to Jeremiah's second lament, God does not just promise judgment, but also rebukes Jeremiah for his impatience, telling him that the challenges he has experienced are only a precursor to more difficult trials to come.
7. The word *shub* means "return" or "repent." God uses this term to rebuke Jeremiah, implying that the prophet needs to return to faithfulness before he can fully serve as God's messenger.
8. Unlike the earlier laments where God directly responded to Jeremiah, in chapters 17, 18, and 20 there is no direct divine response to his laments and complaints. God continues to direct Jeremiah toward his prophetic duties, but does not answer the complaint directly.
9. Jeremiah's prayers become a model for the exiles because they express both a deep awareness of their sin and an intense grief and lament for their suffering and circumstances. His expressions of confidence become their own.
10. The lecture describes Jeremiah's confessions as (1) model prayers for the exiles; (2) expressions of God's heart (anger and grief); and (3) reflections of Jeremiah's struggles in ministry and vocation.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the evolving relationship between Jeremiah and God throughout the confessions, paying particular attention to the shifts in Jeremiah's tone and God's responses. How does this dynamic reflect the complexities of faith during times of crisis?
2. Discuss the significance of Jeremiah's role as a mediator between God and the people. In what ways does he embody both the suffering of God and the suffering of the people?
3. Explore the theme of "toxic ministry" in the lecture, using examples from both Jeremiah's experiences and those of other prophets. How do these experiences challenge or affirm our understanding of what a faithful calling looks like?
4. Considering the exilic context, how do Jeremiah's confessions function as both personal lament and communal outcry? What do they reveal about the nature of suffering and the possibility of hope?
5. How does Jeremiah's dual role as a messenger of God and a representative of the people affect his prayer life and prophetic ministry? Explore the tension between divine calling and human emotion in his experiences.

Glossary of Key Terms

Confessions: In the context of Jeremiah, these are prayers and laments where the prophet expresses his deep personal struggles, complaints, and frustrations to God, often questioning God's actions and justice.

Pathos: Refers to the emotional suffering, pity, and grief experienced by both Jeremiah and the people of Judah.

Inclusio: A literary device where a passage or section of text begins and ends with similar words, phrases, or themes. In the lecture, it refers to the beginning of Jeremiah's call (1:5) and the prophet's lament of despair (20:18) as encompassing his entire prophetic journey.

Mediator: In the context of the lecture, a person who stands between God and the people. Jeremiah fulfills this role by representing both God's perspective to the people, and the people's feelings to God.

Shub: A Hebrew word meaning "to return" or "to repent." God uses this term in his rebuke to Jeremiah, indicating that the prophet needs to repent and return to faithfulness.

Deceptive Brook: A metaphor used by Jeremiah to express his feelings that God has failed or disappointed him, like a stream that dries up when needed most.

Dread Warrior: A title for God which expresses his power and strength and suggests that he is active in fighting on behalf of his people.

Exile: The period when the Jewish people were forcibly removed from their homeland and taken to Babylon.

Lament: A passionate expression of grief, often in the form of a complaint or mourning.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates' lecture on Jeremiah 11-20, focusing on Jeremiah's confessions:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Jeremiah's Confessions (Jeremiah 11-20)

I. Overview:

This lecture, the third in a series, explores the laments and confessions of Jeremiah found throughout chapters 11-20. It examines these prayers not just as expressions of Jeremiah's personal struggles but as:

- **Expressions within the Old Testament Prayer Tradition:** Jeremiah's prayers are similar to other righteous prayers in the Old Testament.
- **Revelations of God's Character:** The confessions reveal God's mingled anger and grief in response to the destruction of his people.
- **Reflections of Jeremiah's Mediatorial Role:** Jeremiah acts as a mediator, representing God to the people, the people to God, and himself as an individual to God.
- **Models of Prayer for the Exiles:** Jeremiah's prayers serve as a template for the Jewish exiles as they grapple with suffering and seek God's deliverance.

II. Key Themes & Ideas:

1. Jeremiah as the Embodiment of God's Word:

- Jeremiah is not just a prophet *speaking* God's word but embodies it through his life and experiences.
- As Andrew Sheed states, "In the life of Jeremiah, God's word, his message is made concrete and immediate to those who hear and see it."
- Jeremiah's life becomes an act of divine self-communication, prefiguring Jesus as the incarnate Word.
- God is not just judging but suffering with his people through Jeremiah.

1. The Pathos of Ministry & the "Toxic" Nature of the Call:

- Ministry is a calling, not just a career, and it can involve immense difficulty and pain, even fracturing one's own relationship with God.

- Dr. Yates uses the example of Moses in Numbers 11, who questions God's burden on him: "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? ... Did I conceive all of these people? Did I give them birth?"
- Moses' anger at the people resulted in his exclusion from the promised land, and the burden of ministry created a "fracture" in Moses' relationship with God.
- Similar to Moses, Jeremiah's ministry experiences cause a fractured relationship with God.
- The prophet's life mirrors the pain of the people and God.
- Elijah's desire to die after the victory on Mount Carmel illustrates the exhaustion and despair that can accompany ministry.

1. Jeremiah's Laments as a Dialogue with God:

- Jeremiah's laments are not mere complaints but a form of wrestling with God about justice, suffering, and the divine calling.
- Jeremiah's laments, like other Old Testament prayers, are sometimes accusatory toward God.
- The laments progress from seeking vengeance on his persecutors to questioning God's fairness, to expressing feelings of abandonment.
- Jeremiah questions why the wicked prosper (12:1) and asks God, "Why is my pain unceasing? My wound incurable, refusing to be healed, will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?" (15:18)
- Jeremiah feels deceived by God because he was compelled to be a prophet, even when no one would listen.

1. God's Responses & Rebuke:

- God's responses are not always immediate or comforting, sometimes containing rebuke and challenges to Jeremiah.
- In response to Jeremiah's first lament (11:18-20) God states he will punish the men of Anathoth.
- To Jeremiah's second lament (12:1) God replies that Jeremiah's difficulties will become even greater, asking, "If you have raced with men on foot and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses?" (12:5).

- To Jeremiah's third lament (15:18), God demands that Jeremiah “return” (*shub*) if he wants to be restored, a command that echoes the message that Jeremiah has been giving to the people. God tells him that his ministry will require that the people turn to him, and that he cannot turn to them.
- God promises deliverance in all three.
- In the final two laments there is no direct response from God, adding to the sense of Jeremiah's struggle and questioning.

1. **The Significance of the Lack of Divine Response:**

- In Jeremiah 17, 18, and 20 there is no response from God following Jeremiah's prayers of lament.
- This silence emphasizes the struggle of faith and the reality of unanswered prayer, a common experience for many believers.
- It highlights the brokenness of the relationship not just between God and Israel, but also between God and his prophet.

1. **Jeremiah's Representation of the People:**

- Jeremiah doesn't just represent God to the people but also the people to God, including their suffering and grief.
- He embodies both God's hurt and the hurt of his people.
- Jeremiah mourns the destruction of Jerusalem, not just as deserved punishment, but as a human tragedy.
- Jeremiah weeps for both God and the people.
- He experiences the suffering of the coming exile, and presents it to God.
- Even though the people deserved the punishment, he acknowledges their suffering.

1. **Jeremiah's Prayers as a Model for the Exiles:**

- Jeremiah's prayers become a model for the Jewish exiles as they grapple with their suffering and seek God's deliverance.
- His words of lament, plea for help, and expression of trust in God provide a template for their prayers.

- Examples include Psalm 137 which echoes Jeremiah's prayer for vengeance, and Psalm 74 and 79 which echoes the suffering he describes.
- The book of Lamentations is seen as an echo of Jeremiah's confessions.
- The ultimate deliverance of Jeremiah in chapter 40 is a reminder that just as God saved him, so God will deliver the exiles.

III. Key Quotes:

- "In the life of Jeremiah, God's word, his message is made concrete and immediate to those who hear and see it." - Andrew Sheed
- "Were Jeremiah simply to stand over against the people and address them from the divine counsel as God's emissary, his message could be perfectly understood. However, it turns out that this cannot do justice to the word of God in its particularity." - Andrew Sheed
- "Lord, did I give birth to all these people that now I'm responsible for them?" - Moses' question in Numbers 11, used to illustrate the burden of ministry.
- "Why is my pain unceasing? My wound incurable, refusing to be healed, will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?" - Jeremiah's lament in 15:18.
- "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed. Save me, and I shall be saved." - Jeremiah's expression of faith even within the lament in 17:14
- "Cursed be the day on which I was born..." - Jeremiah's last words in the confessions, a final expression of despair (20:14).

IV. Conclusion:

Dr. Yates' lecture emphasizes the profound complexity of Jeremiah's role as a prophet. His confessions are not just personal cries of anguish but are a rich tapestry of theological insights into God's character, the pain of ministry, and the suffering of God's people. They also provide a powerful model for prayer, illustrating the importance of honest lament in the face of suffering and the ultimate hope for God's deliverance.

5. FAQs on Yates, Jeremiah, Session 16, Confessions: Pathos of the People, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Jeremiah's Confessions and the Pathos of God and His People

- **What is the significance of Jeremiah's "confessions" within the book of Jeremiah?**
- Jeremiah's confessions, found primarily in chapters 11-20, are not merely personal lamentations but are deeply significant for several reasons. Firstly, they reflect the Old Testament prayer and worship tradition, echoing the righteous prayers of others in the scriptures. Secondly, these cries reveal God's character, particularly His grief and anger in response to the destruction of His people. Thirdly, Jeremiah's life itself becomes a form of God's word, communicating God's will and character directly to the people, prefiguring Jesus as the incarnate Word. His suffering also embodies God's suffering over His people's rejection and represents the people's suffering to God. Jeremiah is a mediator between God and Israel, experiencing their broken relationship and acting as a voice for both sides.
- **How does Jeremiah function as a mediator between God and the people of Israel?**
- Jeremiah acts as a mediator in two primary directions. He represents God to the people by conveying God's anger and hurt over their disobedience. Simultaneously, he represents the people to God, expressing their suffering, anguish, and even their perceived injustices before the divine. This role places Jeremiah in a challenging position, akin to a mediator in a fractured relationship, where he can be misunderstood or rejected by both sides. He is trying to help both sides see and understand the hurt and pain of the other.

- **What does the text suggest about the nature of ministry, as exemplified by Jeremiah's experiences?**
- Jeremiah's ministry illustrates that ministry is not simply a career but a calling that can be exceedingly difficult and even toxic. It can lead to personal spiritual struggles, where one's relationship with God may become fragmented. Jeremiah's experience of rejection, imprisonment, and being deemed a traitor, along with his laments and questions to God, highlight the intense emotional and spiritual toll ministry can take. He mirrors other prophets like Moses and Elijah, who also struggled and suffered in their roles. The intensity of his calling caused him to cry out in pain and anguish.
- **Why does Jeremiah express such intense pain and frustration in his confessions?**
- Jeremiah's expressions of pain and frustration stem from several interconnected factors. He was called to a ministry of pronouncing judgment on his own people, a calling that was met with resistance, rejection, and threats on his life. He also internalizes the suffering of the people, experiencing their anguish as his own. Furthermore, Jeremiah struggles with God's seeming inaction, feeling deceived and overpowered by his calling, leading him to question God's justice and his own fate. This experience causes him to wrestle with God, expressing a range of emotions including anger, despair and a sense of betrayal.
- **How does God respond to Jeremiah's laments and complaints?**
- God's responses to Jeremiah's laments are varied and complex. Initially, God assures him of justice and retribution against his persecutors. However, later, God challenges Jeremiah's perception, pointing out that his current struggles are minor compared to what is to come. In one particular response, God rebukes Jeremiah for his doubt and calls him to "return" (shub), highlighting that the prophet himself needs to repent and align himself with God. Sometimes God does not answer his prayers at all. God also promises to protect and deliver Jeremiah, reaffirming the prophet's calling and divine support.

- **What is significant about God's silence in response to some of Jeremiah's prayers?**
- God's silence in response to some of Jeremiah's prayers is a powerful reminder of the reality that sometimes prayers are not immediately answered, that often the deliverance is in the future. This silence can be interpreted as a call to deeper faith and perseverance. It emphasizes that while God is actively involved, His timing may not align with human expectations. These times of silence underscore the struggle of faith and the difficulties of waiting for God's intervention. It also reveals that God is allowing Jeremiah to struggle and process his calling even when God does not immediately intervene or answer.
- **How do Jeremiah's prayers function as a model for the Jewish exiles and for believers today?**
- Jeremiah's prayers provide a model for both the Jewish exiles of his time and for believers today on how to approach God in times of suffering and injustice. His honesty, vulnerability, and willingness to express a range of emotions before God offer permission to do the same. Jeremiah's confidence in God's eventual deliverance, even amidst doubt and pain, is a reminder of God's faithfulness, even when it feels like deliverance is a long time coming. These prayers are a form of wrestling with God and are not expressions of unbelief, but rather declarations of a deep, struggling faith. His prayers become the model of those who went into exile as they are also expressions of the heart of God towards his people.
- **How does Jeremiah's suffering connect to the suffering of the people of Judah, especially during exile?**
- Jeremiah's suffering is deeply intertwined with the suffering of the people of Judah, particularly during the exile. He becomes a representative of the collective anguish and pain of the nation. Even as he expresses the Lord's grief over their sins, he also weeps for their suffering. He acknowledges that, while their disobedience led to their fate, their pain is real and deserves compassion. In his role as mediator, he tries to help God see the depth of the suffering of the people. His experiences of rejection, loss, and pain mirror the hardships faced by the exiles, making his prayers and laments relatable and meaningful to them. His prayers in turn become their prayers. His deliverance also becomes a sign for their future deliverance.