

JEREMIAH (Teacher's Edition)

Part One: The Call of Jeremiah (1:1-19)

- I. Jeremiah's Call 1:1-10
- II. Jeremiah's Signs 1:11-16
- III. Jeremiah's Assurance 1:17-19

Part Two: The Prophecies to Judah (2:1--45:5)

- I. The Condemnation of Judah 2:1--25:38
- II. The Conflicts of Jeremiah 26:1--29:32
- III. The Future Restoration of Jerusalem 30:1--33:26
- IV. The Present Fall of Jerusalem 34:1--45:5

Part Three: The Prophecies to the Gentiles (46:1--51:64)

- I. Prophecies against Egypt 46
- II. Prophecies against Philistia 47
- III. Prophecies against Moab 48
- IV. Prophecies against Ammon 49:1-6
- V. Prophecies against Edom 49:7-22
- VI. Prophecies against Damascus 49:23-27
- VII. Prophecies against Kedar and Hazor 49:28-33
- VIII. Prophecies against Elam 49:34-39
- IX. Prophecies against Babylon 50:1--51:64

Part Four: The Fall of Jerusalem (52:1-34)

- I. The Capture of Jerusalem 52:1-11
- II. The Destruction of Jerusalem 52:12-23
- III. The Exile to Babylon 52:24-30
- IV. The Release of Jehoiachin 52:31-34

AUTHOR-

This great but admittedly sad book clearly states that **Jeremiah** is the author (1:1). He dictated all his prophecies to his secretary **Baruch** from the beginning of his ministry until the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and later sections were also composed. Only **chapter 52**, a supplement almost identical to (2 Kings 24:18-25:30), was evidently not written by Jeremiah. Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah and was a prophet from the priestly town of Anathoth- and some say a descendant of Abiathar. He was commanded not to **marry or have children** to illustrate his message that **judgment was pending** and that the next generation **would be swept away**.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

Jeremiah prophesied to Judah during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. His call is dated around **626 B.C.**, and his ministry continued until a short time after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., perhaps **580**

B.C. The prophet Zephaniah preceded Jeremiah slightly, and Nahum, Habakkuk, and Obadiah were contemporaries in the land. Ezekiel and Daniel were younger contemporaries **in Babylon**. There were three stages in Jeremiah's ministry: 626-605 B.C. he prophesied while Judah was **threatened by Egypt and Assyria**, 605-586 B.C. he prophesied God's judgment while Judah was threatened and besieged **by Babylon**, and 586-580 B.C. he prophesied **in Jerusalem and Egypt** after Judah's downfall.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

The prophecies of Jeremiah constitute a stern warning to Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem, to abandon **idolatry and apostasy** in order to escape the inevitable consequence of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 25:1-14). The prophet's sermons met with intense opposition from a society fanatically addicted to idolatry. The brave prophet, however, discharged his ministry despite continual persecution and danger of death. The tense three-sided contest for world dominion between Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon forms the background of his prophetic career. Because he predicted the triumph of Babylon and the consequent captivity of Judah, with repeated warning against a useless alliance with Egypt, he incurred almost **universal disfavor**. A note of doom dominates his message. Yet there is an abundance of hope that comes from passages prophesying **Messiah**; these point to a better day- the final restoration of Israel (Jeremiah 23:5-7; 30:4-11; 31:31-34; 33:15-18). This is not to be confused with the restoration from Babylon, but points to a period of unparalleled tragedy (Jeremiah 30:3-10) and the manifestation of David's "righteous Branch ... The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:9). These great messianic prophecies are yet to be fulfilled (Acts 1:7; 15:14-18) in the future millennial kingdom (Romans 11:15-29).

This book, consisting of 52 chapters, is one of the longest books in the Bible. It is also one of the hardest to follow and understand! Unlike most of the other prophetic books, which have a **chronological arrangement**, the material in Jeremiah seems to follow **no logical pattern**. Prophecies delivered in the final years of his ministry may appear at any point in the book, followed by messages that belong to other periods in his life. Mingled with his prophecies of God's approaching judgment are historical accounts of selected events in the life of Judah, personal experiences from Jeremiah's own life, and poetic laments about the fate of his country.

One possible explanation for the disjointed arrangement of the book may have to do with the fact that after prophesying against Judah for about 20 years, the prophet Jeremiah was commanded by God to **put his messages in written form**. He **dictated these to his scribe** or secretary, Baruch, who wrote them on a scroll (36:1-4). Because Jeremiah had been banned from entering the royal court, he sent Baruch to read the messages to King Jehoiakim. To show his contempt for Jeremiah and his message, the king **cut the scroll apart** and threw it in **the fire**

(36:22-23). Jeremiah promptly **dictated his book** to Baruch again, adding "many similar words" (36:32) that had not been included in the first scroll. Jeremiah was a heartbroken prophet with a heartbreaking message, and he labored for more than **forty years** proclaiming a message of **doom** to the stiff-necked people of Judah. Despised and persecuted by his countrymen, Jeremiah bathed his harsh prophecies in **tears of compassion**, a lesson we should all learn. This compassionate heart was manifested many times, including **praying for his people** when God told him **not to!** With a motivation of compassion, he strongly **rebuked the rulers**, priests and **false prophets** for leading the people astray. He rebuked the people for their idolatry. Often, we are told in the book, he desired **to resign** the prophetic office because of the "unfriendly" response his ministry elicited.

Yet Jeremiah persevered, even in the face of a people who seemed to become more **insanely confident** as peril drew near, believing that God **would never** let Jerusalem fall because they possessed the temple and the one true religion.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT OF JEREMIAH (BASIC THEMES)-

What Jeremiah was to preach was **judgment** upon Judah. The reason was the **apostasy** from Yahweh and the **idolatry** practiced on the "high places" just as Israel had done. Many heathenish abuses had found their way into the life of the people. "In your face" heathenism had prevailed under Kings like Manasseh, even the sacrifice of children to the honor of Baal-Molech in the valley of Hinnom (7:31; 19:5; 32:35), and the worship of "the queen of heaven" (7:18; 44:19). It is true that the reformation of Josiah swept away the worst of these abominations. But an **inner return** to Yahweh did not result from this reformation. Because the reformation had been more **on the surface** and **outward**, and was done to please the king, Jeremiah lays at the feet of his people all their previous sins, and the guilt of the present generation as well. Together with **religious insincerity** went the **moral corruption** of the people, such as dishonesty, injustice, oppression of the helpless, slander, and the like. And if you noticed, these charges were especially laid at the feet of the spiritual leaders, the priests and prophets.

What characterizes Jeremiah the most is the **spiritual 'heart'** of this faith or religion he speaks of. The external theocracy Israel was pretending at he delivers up to destruction, because God-fearing hearts did not give life its forms. **External circumcision is of no value without inner purity of heart.** The external temple will be destroyed, because it has become the **hiding-place of sinners.** External sacrifices have no value, because those who offer them are lacking in spirituality, and this is displeasing to God. The law is abused and misinterpreted (Jer 8:8); he declares the words of the prophets as a rule did not come from God! Even the Ark of the Covenant is eventually to make way for a glorious presence of the Lord. The law is to be written in the **hearts** of men (Jer 31:31). Yet in the midst of all this correction and rebuke, there is an idealism that we must not over-estimate in Jeremiah. He believed in a realistic restoration of God's rule!

Jeremiah has so many great lessons! Like Ezekiel, this book stresses **individual responsibility** and clearly proclaims the message that if God's covenant is violated there will be judgment, if obeyed, then there will be blessing. Sin requires **repentance and restoration**; obedience leads to **blessing and joy**. Religion is essentially a moral and spiritual relationship with God, a relationship that requires the devotion of each individual and each person is responsible for **his or her sin**. The realization of this leads to an incredible prophetic insight in the book: the need for **a new covenant!**

The section of the book on the new covenant (30-33) recognizes the fact that the old covenant is good, but that it must be **internalized if it is to be lived out**. Hence, Jeremiah prophesies the new covenant as the spiritual bond between God and the individual. This new and unconditional covenant involves God's writing the law **on human hearts** and forgiving them and remembering their sin **no more**.

One of the great lessons to note in Jeremiah is that with the message of God's sure judgment always came God's promise of a **divinely provided** possibility of **recovery**. Personal recovery is available now!

Every individual has the present possibility of change. Though everything surrounding a person may be collapsing, personal transformation is possible. There are intense appeals to turn from backslidings (called "faithless" in the NIV) in 3:11, 14, and 22 and in 6:16-17 the pathway of return is shown: look for God's **timeless truths** and go back to the **"old way"**, and heed the alarm call of the Spirit. Jeremiah's instructions to those who would be taken to Babylon also give great insights today on how to live while reaping the harvest of your own sin (see chapter 29). Though we are forgiven of our sins instantly, often people must live through the **consequences of those sins**, e.g. marital discord, financial problems, physical ailments, etc. For such a season of living through the harvest of our own sins, Jeremiah teaches us to: "settle in", i.e. commit to the **long haul** and not the **short sprint** of a walk into true Christ likeness (v.5), seek to **minister to others** while we slowly recover rather than focus on our own needs (v.7), and **be confident** in God's plans to prosper us in all ways (v.11).

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

In Jeremiah we see God as **patient and holy**- He delayed judgment for years while forewarning His people and calling them to repentance. But the time for repentance was up- we do not repent when we want but when God wants. Hence, I believe that a key phrase for the book would be: **Judah's last hour**. This could be said for many people.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)-

As to key verse, I chose one that summarizes the discussion in KEY WORD: **JEREMIAH 7:22-24**. God gave them more than religious ritual- He wanted **their hearts** to obey Him, and He both commanded so and warned them, but they refused to listen. As to key chapter, I believe the key chapter speaks to the

revelation of God's great character. He judges, but He always makes provision for restoration. He sees where we fail, and He makes a way, in this case a new covenant. Hence, my key chapter is: JEREMIAH 31.

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- Jeremiah himself is a type of Christ
- The prophetic office and priestly ministry
- In 3:15, Jesus is the Shepherd after God's heart
- The weeping of Jeremiah over the coming disaster brings to mind Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem (9:1)
- Jesus is the King of the nations (10:7,10)
- Jesus is the hope of Israel its Savior (14:8)
- Salvation and healing are in Christ (17:14)
- The prophecy of Herod killing the children to get to Jesus is in 31:15
- Jesus is the Righteous Branch (23:5,6; 33:15,16)
- The New Covenant speaks of Jesus

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- Prophecy, visions and the office of prophet are gifts of the Spirit
- The showers in Jeremiah 3 speak of the Spirit as well as 5:24- the Autumn and Spring rains
- The spring of living water (2:13; 17:13) is the Spirit (see John 7:37-39)
- The anointing of the Spirit for preaching (5:14)
- The revealing of the plot against Jeremiah was the working of the Spirit
- The Spirit writes the law on our hearts (31:33)

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

Jer 1:6-8

God's call on people's lives is based on His sovereign choice and power, not their natural abilities. We must seek God's empowerment to do what He demands!

Jer 1:9-12

A person of faith takes God at His Word and realizes that God is committed to it. God elevates His Word even above His own name. Settle in your heart that God will bring His word to fulfillment and that it is sovereign over the nations and history- and all your life and trouble!

Jer 5:12,13; 6:13-15; 8:10-12

God hates sin! Sin makes us live supremely for ourselves and not for God. Seeker sensitive America calls sin a "problem". This "problem cost God His Son and will send people to hell deservedly so! Don't be deceived- God will not be mocked. Flee from sin and fear it! Reject the rise of false prophets who water down the old fashion gospel. Seek the ancient paths of a heaven to gain and hell

to shun. Ask for discernment. Seek true repentance and conversion and not popularity. God seeks our repentance and is not out to make us feel good. Leaders who preach cheap grace will themselves fall into the sin of the people.

Jer 15:19-21; 43:2-7

Do not compromise the truth due to disfavor or alter God's Word to appease men. The Lord will protect those He sends out to speak His Word.

Jer 19:14-20:6

Remember, you will be persecuted for not going along with the "everybody is OK" seeker philosophy. But God will ultimately vindicate you.

Jer 12:10,11; 23:1-4; 25: 34-36

God holds spiritual leaders responsible for the condition of His flock. The church is to be fruitful and flowing with living water- not divisive, territorial and a spiritual wasteland. Shepherds are to fight for the sheep spiritually, covering them and going after them to save them. God WILL judge those shepherds who do not do this and raise up those after His own heart who will care for and "cover" the sheep.