

24 – Jeremiah: Weeping for Jerusalem

- Jeremiah is called the “**weeping prophet**” because he agonized and mourned over the depraved condition of God’s people and the coming judgment of the city of God. His name means “God will exalt.” He wrote this book with the help of Baruch, his scribe, and the book of Lamentations.
- At an early age, Jeremiah felt the call of God to be His prophet at about the **30th year of Josiah’s reign**. His ministry lasted over 40 years, beginning during good times for Judah, during the reign of Josiah (640 - 609 BC), and continuing through the reigns of Jehoiakin (609 - 597 BC), Jehoiachin (597 BC) and Zedekiah (597 - 587 BC). He was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel. He prophesied while Judah was threatened by Assyria and Egypt (627-605 BC), proclaimed God’s judgment while Judah was threatened and besieged by Babylon (605-586 BC), and ministered in Jerusalem and Egypt AFTER Judah’s fall (586-580 BC)
- He was a deeply spiritual person, full of confidence in God, and with strong convictions about the need for his nation to return to the values of the covenant laws with their roots in the days following the exodus. He also felt he was inadequate for the task, and struggled to come to terms with the harsh message he was given, and even doubts whether he had truly been called by God at all. He **used many creative ways to get through to the people**. He was not only a speaker, but a writer and poet as well.
- God told him not to marry or have children. He lived a solitary, lonely life mourning over his people and his country. He spent much of his time with nature.
- There are various kinds of writing in the book of Jeremiah: **oracles, biographical narratives** about the message and life of Jeremiah (written by Baruch, his scribe) and, speeches - usually introduced by the words, *'The message that came to Jeremiah from the Lord'*.
- He often used dramatic symbols in his preaching, and even walked around with a wooden yoke on his neck. Jeremiah used parables, sermons, and many object lessons in his ministry.
- King Zedekiah had Jeremiah thrown into a cistern. He was eventually spared.
- This book reads like an autobiography. He led a strange life, and gave strange prophecies. He prophesied during the dark days of Judah before judgment and captivity.
- The book of Jeremiah is **VERY difficult to follow**, as it doesn’t run in chronological order.



Michelangelo’s painting of Jeremiah on Sistine Chapel ceiling.

Highlights

It is difficult to summarize this book, so we will reference the main themes and highlights in bullet points:

- God always has a plan:** 29:11-13 *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*
- Judgment is coming, and certain** (7:23-24, 8:11-12), but so too is new life beyond it (promise of restoration) **There will always be a remnant** of God’s People, Promise of Restoration: Jeremiah 23:3
- 12 messages list **causes of Judah’s** coming judgment
- Spiritual **harlotry**
- Captivity will be for **70 years** (*the Sabbath rest for the land not obeyed!*) (25)
- Lack of trust in God will lead to disaster
- Jeremiah as a **role model of honesty and integrity** before God
- Blessed are those who trust (Jeremiah 17:5-8)
- The **deceitful human heart** (Jeremiah 17:9) *“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”*

Conditions in Jeremiah

Beginning of Book	End of Book
Call for reform	Too late – looking back
Assyria in power	Babylon in power
Jews in her land	Jews deported to Babylon
Jeremiah in Jerusalem	Jeremiah in Egypt
Jeremiah addresses whole nation	Jeremiah addresses the remnant
Throne of David occupied	Throne of David empty

- **False and the true prophet** (23:15-32)
- God has not abandoned His throne (that remains true for all time!)
- **Blood curse on Jeconiah** (22:30) (amazing bypass in Luke to get to Jesus!)

- The **New Covenant** (31: 31-34) *“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

- God will **judge the nations** (Jeremiah 46 -51); Doom of Babylon (50-51), Fall AND Destruction (still to come!), Process of divine judgment in national life (ALL nations, not just Israel!)
- The **fall of Jerusalem** (Jeremiah 52)

General Outline of Jeremiah

“YIMEYAHU”

Strange Object Lessons

Call of Jeremiah <small>(commissioned as a prophet)</small>	Condemnation of Judah Prophecies BEFORE the Fall of Jerusalem		Future restoration of Israel	Present fall of Jerusalem	Judgment of 9 Gentile nations	Conclusion Jerusalem Overthrown
1	2-20 <small>General, undated</small>	21-39 <small>Specific, Dated (Last 4 of Judah’s kings) Shepherd King</small>	30-33 <small>New Covenant</small>	34-45	46-51 <small>Egypt, Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Elam, Arabia, Babylon</small>	52
BEFORE THE FALL				THE FALL	AFTER THE FALL	
JUDAH					OTHER NATIONS	JERUSALEM TO BABYLON

INTERESTING NOTE:...What about the Ark?? The Temple was destroyed in 586 BC in the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar on Jerusalem because the people and rulers did not listen to Jeremiah. The big question now about this is, *what happened to the Temple furnishings, specifically the Ark of the Covenant? Some went to Babylon, but what about the Ark? Did Jeremiah have anything to do with its disappearance?*



Apocryphal writings (*NOT inspired word of God, not in Bible, but contain interesting hints about the times*) Baruch was Jeremiah’s scribe. There are several books in the pseudepigraphal writings (like the apocrypha) supposedly written by Baruch after the Fall of Jerusalem. There is a very interesting passage in the 4th book of Baruch, the third chapter that reads: *“But when the hour of night arrived, as the Lord had said to Jeremiah, they went up together on to the walls of the city, Jeremiah and Baruch. And behold there was a sound of trumpets, and angels came out of heaven holding torches in their hands, and they stood on the walls of the city. And when Jeremiah and Baruch saw them, they wept, saying, ‘Now we know that the word is true.’ ...And Jeremiah spoke, saying, ‘Please Lord, let me speak before you.’”* And the Lord said, *“Speak my chosen one, Jeremiah.”* And Jeremiah said, *“Behold, Lord, we know that you are delivering the city into the hands of its enemies, and they will carry the people off to Babylon. What do you want me to do with the holy vessels of the Temple service?”* And the Lord said to him, *“Take them and deliver them to the earth, saying, ‘Hear earth, the voice of him who created you...Guard the vessels of the service unto the coming of the Beloved One.’”* Jeremiah and Baruch went into the sanctuary and, gathering up the vessels, they delivered them to the earth just as the Lord had instructed them. And immediately the earth swallowed them up. And when as morning, behold the host of Chaldeans surrounded the city...But Jeremiah, taking the keys of the Temple went outside of the city and, facing the sun, he tossed them, saying, *“I say to you, sun, take the keys of the Temple of God and keep them until the day in which the Lord will question you about them. Because we were not found worthy of keeping them.”* (4 Baruch 3:1-11, 18-19, 4:1-5)

Unto the coming of the Beloved One....Jesus! First or second coming? The whereabouts of the Ark are a great mystery today. Much speculation about where it could be. Some say Ethiopia. Some say under the city of Jerusalem in a sealed vault, some say Mt. Nebo. Some say Solomon, or his son, was involved, some say Jeremiah. Only God really knows, and it will be revealed when His plan is perfected. Just something interesting to think about!