

Jeremiah

"The Weeping Prophet"

Background Information

Jeremiah records more of his own personal story than any other prophet.

His name means either "Jehovah throws" (lays a foundation) or "Jehovah appoints."

He is nicknamed the weeping prophet for the troubles he faced (9:1; 13:17; 14:17), but also because he wrote during the destruction of Jerusalem and recorded his tears in Lamentations.

He was both a priest and prophet, and remained unmarried as an object lesson (16:1-4).

Time Covered and Outline

The ministry of Jeremiah began during the 13th year of the reign of Josiah (about 627 BC) and ended after the fall of Jerusalem. He fled to Egypt about 586 BC and likely wrote the final part of this book in 561 BC. The book, thus, covers about 66 years, though Jeremiah himself likely lived to an age of nearly 90.

Outlining Jeremiah is difficult, because it is not written chronologically. Speeches and events are interwoven, but are not meant to be read as straight history. A good outline will simply note the messages of Judah.

I. Jeremiah's Preparation (chapter 1)

II. Jeremiah's Proclamations to Judah (chapters 2-45)

A. Judah is condemned (2-29; in this section, there are 14 messages—see box below)

B. Hope for Judah (30-33)

C. Calamity comes on Judah (34-45)

III. Jeremiah's Proclamations to Other Nations (chapters 46-51—see box below)

IV. Historical: The Fall of Jerusalem (chapter 52)

Major Themes

Sin demands punishment

Judgment

Israel still has hope

A remnant of the faithful

Jeremiah's Proclamations

The prophet gives many speeches, both to Judah and to other nations.

To Judah, he gave fourteen: 2:1-3:5; 3:6-6:30; 7:1-10:25; 11:1-13:27; 14:1-17:18; 17:19-27; 18:1-20:18; 21:1-14; 22:1-23:40; 24:1-10; 25:1-38; 26:1-24; 27:1-28:17; 29:1-32

He also gave proclamations to nine foreign nations:

Egypt (46:2-28); Philistia (47:1-7); Moab (48:1-47); Ammon (49:1-6); Damascus (49:23-27); Kedar and Hazor [Arabia] (49:28-33); Elam (49:34-39); and Babylon (50:1-51:64)

God's Character in Jeremiah

Glorious (23:24)
Good (31:12)
Holy (23:9)
Kind (31:3)
Patient (15:15)
Loving (31:3)
Merciful (3:12)
Powerful (5:22)

Righteous (9:24)
Sovereign (5:22)
True (10:10)
Wise (10:7)
Wrathful (3:12-13)

Jesus in Jeremiah

Several word pictures in Jeremiah are meant to foreshadow the coming of Jesus as the ultimate answer and healer. Those include the "Balm in Gilead" (8:22), the good shepherd (23:4), "righteous branch" (23:5), "the Lord our righteousness" (23:6), and David the King (30:9).

Also, the picture of a "fountain of living waters" (2:13) contrasts the judgment poured out on those who are disobedient to the Lord. Jesus would come to bring living water (John 4:14).

Key Words in Jeremiah

Heal (Hebrew *rapha'*) 3:22; 6:14; 8:11; 15:18; 17:14; 30:17; 51:8
Shepherd (Hebrew *ro'ah*). "to tend" 6:3; 23:4; 31:10; 43:12; 49:19; 50:44; 51:23
Prophet (Hebrew *nabi'*) "to proclaim" 1:5; 6:13; 8:10; 18:18; 23:37; 28:9; 37:3; 51:59
Word (Hebrew *dabar*) "the thing spoken" 1:2; 5:14; 13:8; 21:11; 24:4; 32:8; 40:1; 50:1

Elsewhere in the World...

During the time of Jeremiah, cities develop ways to enable water to be brought in, including an underwater tunnel system in Jerusalem and aqueducts in Nineveh.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

Jeremiah's time begins in 2 Kings 23, during the time of Josiah, and covers the rest of that book, as well as the final chapters of 2 Chronicles.

He is also a contemporary prophet of Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and the early work of Daniel (chapters 1-6).

Further, Psalms 74 and 79 were written during his time.