

JEREMIAH

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BACKGROUND

Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry in 627 B.C., nearly 100 years after the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 722 and some 60 years after the end of Isaiah's ministry. Assyria had dominated Judah for much of those 100 years but was now at the end of its glory days. Babylon, the rising new superpower, would conquer Assyria in 605 and Judah in 586.

In about 632, the young King Josiah had begun seriously to seek God's will (see [2 Chron. 34:3](#)). Then in 621 a long-forgotten copy of the law of Moses was discovered, leading to a nationwide religious awakening (see [2 Kings 22-23](#)). But by the time of Jeremiah's first prophetic messages ([Jeremiah 2-6](#)), still during Josiah's reign, the revival had all but ended.

Josiah was killed in an ill-conceived battle with Egypt in 609 (see exposition on [§2 Kings 23:28-30](#)), and Judah came under Egyptian control. Josiah's son Jehoahaz had succeeded him, but Egypt deposed him after just 90 days and made his brother Jehoiakim their puppet king (see exposition on [§2 Kings 23:31-34](#)). Egypt was defeated by Babylon in 605, and Judah came under Babylonian domination.

By 601 the Babylonians had withdrawn from Judah, and Jehoiakim turned to his former Egyptian masters as allies against Babylon ([2 Kings 24:1](#)). The Babylonians returned in 597, just after Jehoiakim's death, and captured Jerusalem. They took Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin captive to Babylon after he had reigned only 90 days (see exposition on [§2 Kings 24:8-16](#)), and installed Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, as their puppet. Egypt urged Zedekiah to become its ally against Babylon.

Much of Jeremiah's ministry had to do with showing his fellow Israelites that their oppression and coming defeat by Babylon were God's way of calling them to repentance and faith (see exposition on [§Jeremiah 27:1-22](#)). Because of that conviction, he opposed any alliance with Egypt—or with any other nation, for that matter—earning himself the hatred of "patriotic" Israelites who saw Egypt as their only hope. Like Isaiah before him, Jeremiah longed for a nation that trusted in God alone (see [Isaiah: Background](#)).

Jeremiah predicted that, in any event, Egypt would provide little help against Babylon. Zedekiah finally sided with Egypt, and when Babylon attacked in 587 and again in 586, Egypt floundered and Jerusalem fell (see [2 Kings 25](#)), just as Jeremiah had predicted. Ironically, Jeremiah was then coerced to flee to the very Egypt whose help he had opposed ([Jeremiah 43:5-7](#)).

Jeremiah's book is a collection of prophecies given at various times in his life. Though they are not all in chronological order, approximate dates can be determined by the kings named (see [Outline](#)).

Shortly after Jerusalem's destruction, Jeremiah recorded his thoughts about that event in the book of Lamentations.

AUTHOR

Jeremiah, whose prophecies were recorded by his secretary, Baruch (see [Jeremiah 36:4](#), [32](#)) and collected by an unknown compiler:

- Jeremiah is referred to numerous times in language that implies his authorship ([Jeremiah 1:1](#), [4](#)).
- Daniel referred to him as author of the passages concerning the 70 years of exile ([Jeremiah 25:11-12](#); [Jeremiah 29:10](#); [Daniel 9:2](#)).
- Matthew names Jeremiah as author of two quotes from the book of Jeremiah ([Matthew 2:17-18](#); [Matthew 27:9-10](#)).

As Baruch noted, Jeremiah's actual words end at [Jeremiah 51:64](#); [Jeremiah 52](#)—especially [Jeremiah 52:31-34](#), which reflects a time well into the exile—may have been added by a disciple of Jeremiah. (Note that [Jeremiah 52:31](#), [33](#) speaks of "Jehoiachin," who elsewhere in Jeremiah, in some translations, is called Jeconiah or Coniah.) [Jeremiah 52](#) is almost identical to [2 Kings 24:18-25:30](#).

From the text of his book, we know more about Jeremiah's personal life than about any other prophet. Sometimes known as the prophet of doom, he had few friends and many enemies. Also known as the weeping prophet, he mourned continually for his people and land (see [Jeremiah 4:19](#); [Jeremiah 8:21](#); [Jeremiah 9:1](#); [Jeremiah 10:19](#)).

The OT mentions eight other Jeremiahs, including two others mentioned in this book ([Jeremiah 35:3](#); [Jeremiah 52:1](#)).

DATE AND LOCATION

See [Background](#). Jeremiah ministered from about 627 B.C. (see [Jeremiah 25:3](#)) to about 581 (see exposition on ^s[Jeremiah 44:1-14](#)), mainly in Jerusalem (see [Jeremiah 22:1-2](#); [Jeremiah 29:1](#); and other passages where he speaks with various kings). The date of compilation is unknown.

PURPOSE

Jeremiah proclaimed God's word concerning five areas:

- God: To proclaim that God created and controls everything (see [Jeremiah 10:12-16](#); [Jeremiah 32:26-27](#)).
- Sin: To show that the seriousness of Judah's sin demanded divine punishment.
- God's remedy for sin: To introduce the radical, once-for-all solution to sin—the divine gift of a new heart ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#); [Jeremiah 33:6-9](#)).
- God's person to provide the remedy: To predict the renewal of the Davidic kingship by the coming Messiah (the "Branch," [Jeremiah 23](#); [Jeremiah 33](#)), who would save Israel from its sins ([Jeremiah 23:6](#); [Jeremiah 33:16](#)).
- God's plan for redeemed humanity: The Messiah will one day establish his millennial kingdom (see [Isaiah: Background](#)), free from the curse of sin and death (see [Jeremiah 23:1-8](#); [Jeremiah 30:9](#); [Jeremiah 33:14-18](#)). In Jeremiah, as in Isaiah, prophecies of a return from exile have two great future events in mind: the return of the Jews from Babylon, and redeemed humanity's return to God in the Millennium (see [Jeremiah 30:10-11](#) and exposition on ^s[Isaiah 26:20-27:13](#)).

UNIQUE FEATURES

- Jeremiah was the most persecuted OT prophet.
- He was the only prophet forbidden to pray for his nation (see exposition on ^s[Jeremiah 7:16-27](#)).

- He was the only prophet to record an eyewitness account of Jerusalem's fall ([Jeremiah 39](#); see Lamentations).
- Jeremiah contains the Bible's most extended and detailed prophecies about Babylon, mentioning it 164 times—more than in all the rest of the Bible. The apostle John would give the name Babylon to the city of the Antichrist ([Rev. 17-18](#)).
- Jeremiah referred to another prophet, Micah, by name ([Jeremiah 26:18](#)). Jeremiah himself was referred to by Daniel ([Daniel 9:2](#)). Though many of the prophets were contemporaries, only one other writing prophet, Daniel, was mentioned by name in print by a fellow prophet ([Ezekiel 14:14, 20](#); [Ezekiel 28:3](#)). Likewise the prophetic books make only one mention by name of a major nonwriting prophet (Elijah, [Malachi 4:5](#)).
- Jeremiah records the last of the three most important OT unconditional covenants (see [Biblical Covenants](#)):
 - the Abrahamic covenant ([Genesis 12:1-3](#))
 - the Davidic covenant ([2 Samuel 7:10-16](#))
 - the New Covenant ([Jeremiah 31:31](#))

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Other prophets:

- Jeremiah was a contemporary of Habakkuk and shared some of his concerns. Parallels can also be seen with Micah and Haggai, as noted in the *Comparison* sections for their books. [Obadiah 1:1-9](#) parallels [Jeremiah 49:7-22](#).

OUTLINE

(Approximate dates indicate breaks in time sequence.)

1. JEREMIAH'S CALL ([Jeremiah 1](#)) [627 B.C.]
2. JEREMIAH'S MINISTRY TO JUDAH ([Jeremiah 2-45](#))
 - A. Calls to repentance ([Jeremiah 2-6](#)) [626-615]
 - B. The Temple and idolatry ([Jeremiah 7-10](#)) [608]
 - C. The broken covenant ([Jeremiah 11-12](#))
 - D. Warnings of doom ([Jeremiah 13:1-15:16](#)) [605-590]
 - E. Jeremiah's sorrow and singleness ([Jeremiah 15:17-16:9](#))
 - F. Further warnings ([Jeremiah 16:10-17:27](#))
 - G. The potter and the jar ([Jeremiah 18:1-20:6](#))
 - H. Jeremiah's anguish ([Jeremiah 20:7-18](#))
 - I. Warnings to kings ([Jeremiah 21-22](#))

- X. The Branch of righteousness ([Jeremiah 23:1-8](#))
 - K. Warnings about false prophets ([Jeremiah 23:9-40](#))
 - L. The vision of figs ([Jeremiah 24](#)) [597-586]
 - M. The cup of God's wrath ([Jeremiah 25](#)) [605]
 - N. Jeremiah imprisoned ([Jeremiah 26](#)) [608]
 - O. Jeremiah urges submission to Babylon ([Jeremiah 27-29](#)) [593]
 - 1. The sign of the yoke ([Jeremiah 27](#))
 - 2. Hananiah's reaction ([Jeremiah 28](#))
 - 3. Warning the exiles about false prophets ([Jeremiah 29](#))
 - P. The New Covenant ([Jeremiah 30-31](#)) [589-587]
 - Q. Jeremiah buys a field ([Jeremiah 32](#))
 - R. The Branch of righteousness ([Jeremiah 33](#))
 - S. Zedekiah and the slaves ([Jeremiah 34](#))
 - T. The Recabites ([Jeremiah 35](#)) [c. 607]
 - U. Jeremiah's scroll ([Jeremiah 36](#)) [605]
 - V. Jeremiah imprisoned and kept in a cistern ([Jeremiah 37-38](#)) [587-586]
 - W. Jerusalem falls ([Jeremiah 39](#))
 - X. Jeremiah, Gedaliah, and Johanan ([Jeremiah 40-41](#)) [586-585]
 - Y. The remaining Jews flee to Egypt ([Jeremiah 42:1-43:7](#))
 - Z. Jeremiah's ministry in Egypt ([Jeremiah 43:8-44:30](#))
 - 1. A prophecy for Baruch ([Jeremiah 45](#)) [605]
3. WARNINGS TO THE NATIONS ([Jeremiah 46-51](#)) [605-585]
- A. Egypt ([Jeremiah 46](#))
 - B. Philistia ([Jeremiah 47](#))

- C. Moab ([Jeremiah 48](#))
- D. Ammon ([Jeremiah 49:1-6](#))
- E. Edom ([Jeremiah 49:7-22](#))
- F. Damascus ([Jeremiah 49:23-27](#))
- G. Kedar and Hazor ([Jeremiah 49:28-33](#))
- H. Elam ([Jeremiah 49:34-39](#))
- I. Babylon ([Jeremiah 50-51](#))
- X. HISTORICAL POSTSCRIPT ([Jeremiah 52](#)) [586-560]

TIMELINE

627 B.C.:	Jeremiah begins ministry
608 B.C.:	Jeremiah's Temple sermon, imprisonment
605 B.C.:	Judah's 1st deportation to Babylon
597 B.C.:	2nd deportation
593 B.C.:	Jeremiah's yoke sermon
c. 586 B.C.:	Jeremiah in cistern, Jerusalem falls, Jeremiah to Egypt
581 B.C.:	Jeremiah's last prophecy

[Jeremiah 1:1-10](#) *Set apart before his birth.* Jeremiah began his book by noting that his ministry extended from the 13th year of Josiah (627 B.C.) until "the people of Jerusalem were taken away as captives" (586). His ministry would actually extend longer, possibly to about 581 (see exposition on ^s[Jeremiah 44:1-14](#)). Long before Jeremiah's birth, God had decided Jeremiah would be a prophet. Despite Jeremiah's reluctance and fear ([Jeremiah 1:6-8](#)), God gave him a difficult assignment ([Jeremiah 1:10](#)) and promised his divine help ([Jeremiah 1:7-9](#)).

[Jeremiah 1:11-19](#) *A branch and a boiling pot.* To confirm his calling of the frightened Jeremiah, God gave him two visions: The almond branch ([Jeremiah 1:11-12](#)), which blooms late, spoke of a judgment long overdue, ready to burst forth. The pot of boiling water "tipping from the north" revealed that God would pour the wrath of Babylon upon Israel ([Jeremiah 1:13-15](#)). God encouraged Jeremiah to boldly prophesy these things, even though Israel would actively oppose him.

[Jeremiah 2:1-19](#) *God's bride becomes the lions' dinner.* Jeremiah began his first message ([Jeremiah 2:1-3:5](#)), given during Josiah's reign (see [Jeremiah 3:6](#)), by recalling the days when the Israelites had been devoted to their Lord, as a bride to her husband ([Jeremiah 2:1-3](#)). Regrettably, they no longer displayed such love. They had committed sins of commission, serving idols; and sins of omission, forsaking their true God ([Jeremiah 2:4-13](#)). Such backsliding had brought the enemy upon the northern kingdom like hungry lions devouring their prey, and the same thing could happen to Judah ([Jeremiah 2:14-19](#)).

Jeremiah 2:20-37 *"The strongest soap cannot remove this stain!"* God's people had chased after foreign gods as an adulterer pursues an affair, as an animal in mating season ([Jeremiah 2:20-25](#)). They had collected as many foreign gods as there were cities in Judah ([Jeremiah 2:28](#); see [Jeremiah 11:13](#)) and had forgotten the one true God ([Jeremiah 2:32](#)). Despite the obvious evidence of their sin ([Jeremiah 2:33-34](#)), they claimed innocence ([Jeremiah 2:23, 33](#)). No human effort could wash away such great sin ([Jeremiah 2:22](#)). The only remedy was national humiliation through military defeat ([Jeremiah 2:37](#)).

As it had throughout its history, Israel sought security in political alliances rather than in God alone ([Jeremiah 2:17-19, 36-37](#)). Jeremiah warned that such alliances would prove futile ([Jeremiah 2:36-37](#)), just as they had in Isaiah's time. Both Assyria and Egypt would soon be defeated by Babylon. Jeremiah, like Isaiah, saw a strong connection between foreign alliances and religious apostasy ([Jeremiah 2:19](#); see exposition on the following passages: [§][Isaiah 30:1-17](#); [§][1 Kings 11:1-8](#); [§][2 Kings 16:10-20](#)).

Jeremiah 3:1-5 *"If you'll return, I'll overlook my law."* Though he had every right to condemn them for "prostituting" themselves with false gods, and though his law said a man could not take back his divorced wife if she had married another man, God wanted his unfaithful children to return to him.

Jeremiah 3:6-11 *The sad story of two sinful sisters.* Jeremiah began the second of his two messages during Josiah's reign ([Jeremiah 3:6-6:30](#)) by again reminding the people of the fall of the northern kingdom. "Treacherous" Judah was worse than her "faithless" sister Israel because Judah had failed to learn from Israel's fall.

Jeremiah 3:12-4:4 *The glad offer of a grieved but gracious Father.* If they would acknowledge their sin, God would forgive both Israel and Judah ([Jeremiah 3:12-14](#)), and would bring them from exile to his everlasting kingdom ([Jeremiah 3:14-18](#)). In the Millennium (see [Purpose](#)), the shadow of religious observance surrounding the Ark will be replaced by the substance of the Messiah himself. This present age will be forgotten in the light of his presence ([Jeremiah 3:16](#); see [Isaiah 65:17](#)). Having made his offer, God once again called his children to repent ([Jeremiah 3:19-4:4](#)).

Jeremiah 4:5-31 *Devastated by his own decree of doom.* With growing urgency, Jeremiah declared that a "lion" from the "north" (Babylon) was already preparing to invade Judah ([Jeremiah 4:5-9](#)). Once more he called on Judah to repent ([Jeremiah 4:14](#)). In anguish and with pounding heart he described a fruitful land of Judah turned into a wilderness ([Jeremiah 4:19-31](#)).

Jeremiah 5:1-9 *The price of reprieve: Just one who is righteous.* With biting irony, God promised to pardon the whole nation if just one person could be found who sought truth and practiced justice ([Jeremiah 5:1-2](#)). Jeremiah searched in vain for such a person ([Jeremiah 5:3-5](#)) and concluded that God's threatened punishment would be well deserved ([Jeremiah 5:6-9](#)).

Jeremiah 5:10-19 *"You served their gods; now you'll serve them!"* Because Israel had ignored God's efforts to discipline them ([Jeremiah 5:10-13](#)), he would bring Babylon against them ([Jeremiah 5:14-17](#)). Because they had worshiped foreign gods in their own land, they would now serve a foreign nation in another land ([Jeremiah 5:18-19](#)). Judah would be exiled, not totally destroyed ([Jeremiah 5:18](#); see [Jeremiah 4:27](#)).

Jeremiah 5:20-31 *The oceans obey him, but his people do not.* The oceans remained in their ordained place, obeying their Creator, but God's people had chosen otherwise ([Jeremiah 5:22-25](#)). Did not God have the right to punish such rebellion? ([Jeremiah 5:29](#)). As in all of Scripture, the poor and fatherless are high on the list of God's concerns ([Jeremiah 5:28](#); see exposition on [§][Isaiah 58:6-14](#)).

Jeremiah 6:1-9 *Run, Benjamin, run!* As his message drew to a close, Jeremiah warned his own tribe, Benjamin, to prepare to flee the advancing Babylonians. He painted a grim scene of the coming invasion. Worst of all, it was the Lord himself who would lead this army against his own people ([Jeremiah 6:6-9](#))! "The Lord disciplines those he loves" ([Hebrews 12:6](#)).

Jeremiah 6:10-21 *No shame, no peace.* Jeremiah repeated the charges against Judah: They were all sinful, "from the least to the greatest" ([Jeremiah 6:13](#)). Their prophets and priests were promising peace ([Jeremiah 6:14](#); see [Jeremiah 8:11](#)), but where there is unashamed wickedness, there can be no peace ([Jeremiah 6:15](#)). God had called his people to "ask for the old paths," where they could have found peace, but they had refused to do so ([Jeremiah 6:16](#), KJV; see [Jeremiah 18:15](#)). Therefore, their only prospect was judgment ([Jeremiah 6:18-21](#); see exposition on [§][Ezekiel 13:1-23](#)). On "obstacles" ([Jeremiah 6:21](#)), see exposition on [§][Isaiah 8:11-22](#).

Jeremiah 6:22-30 *"Rejected silver"—that's what they'll call us.* In one last effort to bring about repentance, Jeremiah described again the cruelty of the coming invasion. If the Israelites didn't repent, God would reject them as one rejects inferior silver ([Jeremiah 6:27-30](#)).

Jeremiah 7:1-15 *"You think he won't destroy it? Look at Shiloh!"* Shortly after the death of Josiah in 609 B.C., after Egypt had deposed Jehoahaz and made Jehoiakim king, Jeremiah spoke concerning Judah's insincere worship in the Temple ([Jeremiah 7:1-8:3](#), often called his Temple sermon). The people of Judah falsely assumed that, since God's Temple was there, God would not destroy Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 7:1-4](#)). But Jeremiah exposed the hypocrisy of standing before God in the Temple while living in sin at home. They need only visit Shiloh, where God had allowed the Tabernacle to be destroyed and the Ark to be captured (see [1 Samuel 4](#)), to know that he would not hesitate to destroy Jerusalem as well.

Some scholars see [Jeremiah 7:4](#) as Jeremiah's expression of cynicism concerning the revival that had taken place under Josiah (see [Background](#)). The chronicler noted, however, that Jeremiah mourned Josiah's death ([2 Chron. 35:25](#)).

Jesus would apply [Jeremiah 7:11](#) to the false worship of his day (see [Matthew 21:13](#)).

Jeremiah 7:16-27 *The prophet should pray no more.* God told Jeremiah to cease praying for Judah: Since they had turned a deaf ear to God, he would turn a deaf ear to them. In such a case it is useless to pray ([Jeremiah 7:16](#); see [Jeremiah 11:14](#); [Jeremiah 14:11](#); [1 John 5:16](#)). Since the day God brought them out of Egypt, Israel had disobeyed him ([Jeremiah 7:17-26](#)). Jeremiah could be sure that they would disobey him as well ([Jeremiah 7:27](#)).

Jeremiah 7:28-8:3 *"Shave your head in shame, sinful city!"* Because of the seriousness of their sin and because of the great suffering soon to come upon them, it would be fitting for the Israelites to shave their heads in mourning ([Jeremiah 7:28-34](#); see [Jeremiah 47:5](#); [Jeremiah 48:37](#)). In the coming judgment, the bones of the dead would be exhumed and exposed to the very elements they once worshiped ([Jeremiah 8:1-3](#)).

The people had brought pagan altars into the Temple ([Jeremiah 7:30](#); see [2 Kings 21:5](#)) and were even sacrificing their children to foreign gods (see [Jeremiah 19:4-6](#); [Isaiah 30:33](#)). This horror was taking place at Topheth, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, or Gehenna, on the southern edge of Jerusalem. By NT times, the name of Gehenna was synonymous with hell, and it is translated as such 12 times in the NT (see [Matthew 5:22](#); [James 3:6](#)).

[Jeremiah 8:4-17](#) *"The birds know more than my people!"* Jeremiah's Temple sermon was followed by a series of prophecies about sin and judgment ([Jeremiah 8:4-10:25](#)). While birds followed their God-given instincts, God's people failed to heed his law ([Jeremiah 8:4-9](#)), therefore he would punish them ([Jeremiah 8:10-13](#)). Because they were not ashamed of their sin, he would bring great shame on them ([Jeremiah 8:12](#)). They would be overrun by their enemies ([Jeremiah 8:14-17](#)).

[Jeremiah 8:18-9:2](#) *No medicine? No doctors?* Burdened by Judah's plight, Jeremiah pleaded with the Lord to heal them ([Jeremiah 8:18-22](#)) and wept for the doomed cities ([Jeremiah 9:1-2](#)). Yet as the prophet pleaded his people's case ([Jeremiah 8:18-19](#)), God merely repeated the charges against them ([Jeremiah 8:19](#)). Jeremiah was willing to journey as far as Gilead to find a cure (see [Genesis 37:25](#)). God would eventually go much farther than Gilead to find a permanent cure for sin (see [Jeremiah 23:6](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

[Jeremiah 9:3-16](#) *Why all this suffering? For all their sin!* The Lord spoke again of Judah's sin, focusing this time on dishonesty in interpersonal relationships ([Jeremiah 9:3-8](#)). Then he asked a rhetorical question: "Should I not punish them for this?" ([Jeremiah 9:9](#)). Again Jeremiah lamented Judah's coming destruction ([Jeremiah 9:10](#)), and again God pronounced its doom and spelled out the cause of that doom: "because my people have abandoned the instructions I gave them; they have refused to obey my law" ([Jeremiah 9:13](#)).

[Jeremiah 9:17-26](#) *A call to sorrow.* The Lord called on all Judah to publicly mourn their approaching doom ([Jeremiah 9:17-22](#)). They would be punished in the same way God would punish a sinful Gentile nation ([Jeremiah 9:25-26](#)). But the punishment would be for their ultimate good, as Jews and Gentiles alike would come to know their God ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)). On [Jeremiah 9:24](#), see [1 Cor. 1:31](#); on [Jeremiah 9:26](#), see [Romans 2:28](#).

[Jeremiah 10:1-18](#) *Worshipping the worthless.* Denying the true, living, eternal Creator God for false, dead, temporal idols is surely the height of insanity, said Jeremiah. His picture of workmen building the very gods they would later worship recalls Isaiah's similar sarcasm (see exposition on [Isaiah 44:6-28](#)).

[Jeremiah 10:19-25](#) *"Have mercy! We're only human!"* Once again Jeremiah fell into deep depression as he contemplated Judah's coming judgment ([Jeremiah 10:19-22](#)). He pleaded with God to be merciful to his people ([Jeremiah 10:24](#)), who were, after all, only human ([Jeremiah 10:23](#)), and to reserve his most severe judgment for the Gentiles who had persecuted them. On [Jeremiah 10:23](#), see [Proverbs 16:1](#); [Proverbs 20:24](#).

[Jeremiah 11:1-10](#) *"Remember the Exodus? and the law?"* In a message perhaps delivered in connection with the rediscovered law (see [2 Kings 22-23](#)), Jeremiah reminded the people of their historic disregard for that law and of their ingratitude for deliverance from the slavery of Egypt.

Jeremiah 11:11-17 *Again he says, "No more prayer!"* Considering their sin and ingratitude, the time for praying for Judah had ended ([Jeremiah 11:14](#)), and the time for punishment had come. Judah had as many gods as cities ([Jeremiah 11:13](#)), but none of them could even hear, much less save Judah from God's judgment.

Jeremiah 11:18-23 *"We hate the message; let's kill the messenger!"* The people of Jeremiah's hometown threatened to kill him if he didn't stop prophesying. Jeremiah cried out to the Lord, who declared that none of Jeremiah's opponents would survive the coming invasion.

Jeremiah 12:1-17 *How long? Not much longer!* Perplexed by the continuing prosperity of the wicked, Jeremiah asked the Lord how long he would delay their day of reckoning ([Jeremiah 12:1-4](#)). God replied that because of Judah's great sin, the "sword of the LORD" would quickly destroy them ([Jeremiah 12:5-13](#)). God would "uproot" both Judah and its evil neighbors from their lands but would then restore them all, providing they kept his law ([Jeremiah 12:14-17](#)). Concerning the fate of these Gentile neighbor nations, see [Jeremiah 46-49](#). On the prosperity of the wicked, see exposition on [Psalm 37](#).

Jeremiah 13:1-27 *Signs of the times.* Jeremiah gave five warnings concerning the coming destruction:

Rotted and ruined, just like Judah (13:1-11). At God's direction, Jeremiah acted out an object lesson concerning Israel's sin: Just as his linen belt was rendered useless ([Jeremiah 13:1-7](#)), so Judah had become useless to God.

A different kind of wine (13:12-14). When Jeremiah said, "All your wineskins will be full of wine," the people assumed he was talking of prosperity. But he declared that God would fill Judah's leaders with drunkenness and then destroy them.

"Humble yourselves while you can see" (13:15-17). Judah should humbly seek God, before the darkness of foreign invasion overtook them.

Even the king should humble himself (13:18-19). Jeremiah called on Judah's king and queen to fall before God in humility, for their kingdom would soon fall. This was probably the young king Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), who ruled just 90 days before being taken captive in 597 B.C.; and his mother, Nehushta (see [Jeremiah 29:2](#); [2 Kings 24:8](#)).

Judah stop sinning? Impossible! (13:20-27). Judah's punishment was inevitable because its moral condition was hopeless. It was as impossible for Judah to cease sinning as for a human or animal to change skin color. God would address this impossible situation in [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#).

Jeremiah 14:1-12 *"No rain, and here's the reason."* Prolonged drought had brought famine in Judah. Already spiritually dry, they were now physically dry as well ([Jeremiah 14:1-6](#)). They repented ([Jeremiah 14:7-9](#)), but God turned a deaf ear, once more ordering Jeremiah not to even pray for them; the drought was the just punishment for their sin ([Jeremiah 14:10-12](#)). From its earliest history, drought was part of the prescribed curse on Israel for not following God (see [Leviticus 26:14-20](#)).

Jeremiah 14:13-15:9 *"Spare them? Not even for Samuel's sake!"* Jeremiah observed that many prophets were promising peace. God replied that he had not authorized those prophets and that both they and the people would perish ([Jeremiah 14:13-16](#)). Both Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 14:17-18](#)) and the people ([Jeremiah 14:19-22](#)) again pleaded for the drought to end. But the Lord was determined to carry out his intentions to punish his people. He would not spare them, even if Moses and Samuel, two of

Israel's godliest men, were to plead their case ([Jeremiah 15:1](#)). Such would be the coming judgment that there would be "more widows than the grains of sand along the seashore" ([Jeremiah 15:8](#)). Even a mother of seven would be childless ([Jeremiah 15:9](#)).

[Jeremiah 15:10-21](#) *"You have let me down!"* Overwhelmed by the opposition to his message, Jeremiah regretted the day of his birth, but God reassured him that he would be vindicated ([Jeremiah 15:10-11](#)). God spoke again of the coming judgment ([Jeremiah 15:12-14](#)), and Jeremiah urged him to bring that judgment swiftly so that, after all his lonely suffering, he would be vindicated as a prophet. He accused God of letting him down, being "as uncertain as a seasonal brook," by not bringing swift judgment ([Jeremiah 15:15-18](#)).

With mild rebuke, God assured Jeremiah that he would succeed in his prophetic ministry ([Jeremiah 15:20-21](#)), but only if he would focus on the Lord and on his ministry instead of letting his opponents upset him ([Jeremiah 15:19](#)).

[Jeremiah 16:1-9](#) *No wife for Jeremiah.* God told Jeremiah not to marry ([Jeremiah 16:1-2](#)) nor to take part in community life ([Jeremiah 16:8](#)). By abstaining from such pleasures, he would bear witness that the devastation to come would include the disruption of all such normal practices.

[Jeremiah 16:10-21](#) *Repayment now, restoration and revival later.* While the deliverance from Egypt was supernatural, even more miraculous would be the day when God would bring his people home from Babylon, the land of the north ([Jeremiah 16:14-15](#)). But first, God would have to "punish them doubly for all their sins" ([Jeremiah 16:18](#)), making them fair game for Gentile "fishermen" and "hunters" ([Jeremiah 16:16-17](#)). Jeremiah rejoiced that Gentile idolaters would someday acknowledge the one true God ([Jeremiah 16:19-20](#)), and God assured him that this would indeed happen.

The second exodus of [Jeremiah 16:14-15](#) may foreshadow the final great regathering of all nations in the Millennium (see exposition on [Isaiah 54:1-17](#)).

[Jeremiah 17:1-8](#) *Trusting in everything but God.* Judah's sin was indelibly inscribed on their stubborn hearts; therefore, God would punish them ([Jeremiah 17:1-4](#)). If they would only trust God, they would flourish like a well-watered tree ([Jeremiah 17:7-8](#); see [Psalm 1](#); [Isaiah 12:2](#); [Isaiah 30:18](#)). They were trusting in mere human alliances and therefore had become like wilted shrubs in the desert, fruitless and barren ([Jeremiah 17:5-6](#); see exposition on [Jeremiah 2:20-37](#)).

[Jeremiah 17:9-13](#) *The great deceiver.* Judah's refusal to trust God was but one example of the utter depravity of the human heart ([Jeremiah 17:9](#); see [Isaiah 64:6-7](#); [Romans 3:10](#)). God was Israel's only hope; there was no hope for those who rejected him ([Jeremiah 17:13](#)).

[Jeremiah 17:14-18](#) *"Remember your message, and your messenger!"* Jeremiah pleaded for vindication and for his own safety. He had no desire to see Judah destroyed ([Jeremiah 17:16](#)). On the other hand, he prayed for swift judgment on all who mocked his prophecies ([Jeremiah 17:18](#)) and asked why those prophecies had not yet come true ([Jeremiah 17:15](#)).

[Jeremiah 17:19-27](#) *Observe it and live; ignore it and die.* Judah was challenged to hear God's word and cease doing business on the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath would mean remaining in the land. Ignoring it would bring destruction (see exposition on [Neh. 13:15-22](#)).

Jeremiah 18:1-17 *Too late to reshape it?* Jeremiah watched a potter reshape a flawed pot into something better. God declared that he, like a potter, had sovereign control over Israel, to shape or reshape it as he pleased. Even though he had decreed judgment, he could easily change plans if Judah repented ([Jeremiah 18:1-10](#)). Jeremiah relayed the offer to the men of Judah, but they declined, saying they were too sinful to repent ([Jeremiah 18:11-12](#)).

God expressed dismay at his people. They had forsaken the "cold, flowing streams" of godliness for the "muddy paths of sin"; therefore he would have to judge them ([Jeremiah 18:13-17](#)).

Jeremiah 18:18-23 *"We can't shut him up, so we'll shut him out!"* Unable to silence Jeremiah, his enemies plotted to slander and ostracize him. Jeremiah asked God to bring them to justice.

Jeremiah 19:1-15 *The sign of the smashed jar.* At God's instruction, Jeremiah took some of Judah's elders to the Valley of Hinnom (see exposition on [§Jeremiah 7:28-8:3](#)), where he smashed an earthen jar as a sign of judgment. Returning to Jerusalem, he repeated the message.

Jeremiah 20:1-6 *Magor-missabib: Fear on every side.* Angered by Jeremiah's prophecies, Pashhur the priest persecuted him. Jeremiah responded by giving the priest a name prophetic of the approaching terror ([Jeremiah 20:3-6](#)).

Jeremiah 20:7-18 *"I'd quit if I could, but I can't."* Jeremiah complained again about the way he was being ridiculed. His tormentors had applied to him the name he had given Pashhur ([Jeremiah 20:3, 10](#)). Jeremiah wanted to give up his ministry but felt compelled to continue ([Jeremiah 20:9](#)). He praised God for his mighty presence ([Jeremiah 20:11-13](#)), yet lamented the day of his birth.

Jeremiah 21:1-10 *Deliverance? Yes, but not the kind they want.* In about 588 B.C., shortly before Jerusalem's fall, King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to pray for deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians ([Jeremiah 21:1-2](#)). Jeremiah replied that, quite to the contrary, God would deliver the king and his people to the Babylonians ([Jeremiah 21:3-10](#)). God had offered his people the way of life, but they had chosen the way of death. Death would come at the hands of Babylon. All who would save themselves should defect to Babylon ([Jeremiah 21:8-10](#)). Jeremiah had given similar warnings at least twice already (see [Jeremiah 24](#) and exposition on [§Jeremiah 27:1-22](#)).

[Jeremiah 37:1-10](#) records a similar request for prayer by Zedekiah at about the same time.

As elsewhere in Scripture, Jeremiah refers to the people of Babylon as the "Chaldeans" (see exposition on [§2 Kings 24:8-16](#)).

Jeremiah 21:11-22:30 *Warnings fit for a king.* Jeremiah recorded a series of prophecies to various kings of his time in Judah:

Promote justice or prepare for judgment (21:11-22:9). Kings should pursue justice. The alternative is fiery judgment.

Death in a distant land (22:10-12). Jehoahaz (Shallum), Josiah's evil son and first successor, had been taken captive to Egypt in 609 B.C. after reigning just 90 days. Jeremiah predicted he would die there (see [2 Kings 23:31-34](#)).

A donkey's death (22:13-23). Unlike his righteous father Josiah ([Jeremiah 22:15-16](#)), Jehoiakim (609-597) had lived in selfish luxury. He would be given the burial of a donkey ([Jeremiah 22:19](#)).

Deposed and discarded (22:24-30). Because of his sin, Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin (also called Coniah and Jeconiah) would be discarded like a broken dish ([Jeremiah 22:28](#)). Even if he were a valued ring, his fate would be the same ([Jeremiah 22:24](#)). Jehoiachin was deposed and exiled in 597 after reigning just 90 days (see exposition on [2 Kings 24:8-16](#)); and, just as Jeremiah prophesied ([Jeremiah 22:30](#)), none of his sons succeeded him. (He was succeeded by Zedekiah, his uncle.)

[Jeremiah 23:1-8](#) *Careless shepherds vs. the Good Shepherd.* Israel's spiritual and political shepherds had failed to take care of their flock; therefore the flock had been scattered. But God would regather them, under new and better leaders ([Jeremiah 23:1-4](#)). God would raise up a descendant of David, a "righteous Branch," to "do what is just and right throughout the land" ([Jeremiah 23:5-6](#); see [Jeremiah 33:15-16](#); see exposition on [Isaiah 4:2-6](#)). This will take place in the Millennium (see exposition on [Jeremiah 16:10-21](#)).

[Jeremiah 23:9-40](#) *Their flowery words vs. his fiery word.* Jeremiah warned that many of Judah's prophets and priests were "ungodly, wicked men" ([Jeremiah 23:9-12](#)). The prophets got their messages from foreign gods and promoted ungodliness ([Jeremiah 23:13-15](#)). They promised peace to everyone, even "those who stubbornly follow their own evil desires" ([Jeremiah 23:16-17](#); see [Jeremiah 6:14](#); [Judges 21:25](#)).

False prophets and priests would reap the whirlwind of God's fury ([Jeremiah 23:18-20](#)), for they had spoken boldly even though God did not send them. If they had truly been speaking for God, they would have promoted morality ([Jeremiah 23:21-22](#)). God was well aware of what they were doing ([Jeremiah 23:23-24](#)).

God's true word was "like fire" ([Jeremiah 23:29](#)). The false prophets, by contrast, spoke glib words based either on dreams or on the thoughts of other false prophets and tried to pass those off as God's word ([Jeremiah 23:25-32](#)). What's more, they made light of Jeremiah's message of doom ([Jeremiah 23:33-38](#)). Therefore, God would judge them ([Jeremiah 23:39-40](#)). Their so-called dreams would become nightmares!

[Jeremiah 24:1-10](#) *Two figs, two fates.* Sometime during the reign of Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.), after Jehoiachin and many of Judah's elite (including Ezekiel) had been led captive to Babylon in 597 (see [Ezekiel 40:1](#)), Jeremiah saw a vision of two baskets of figs, one good and one rotten. The good represented the Jews taken captive in 597. God would protect them and bring them back to faith in him. The bad figs were those who remained in Jerusalem or had fled to Egypt. They would be scattered throughout the earth, to be consumed by "the sword, the famine, and pestilence." (See exposition on [Jeremiah 27:1-22](#).) On "hearts that will recognize me" ([Jeremiah 24:7](#)), see exposition on [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#).

[Jeremiah 25:1-7](#) *"I've been warning you for 23 years . . ."* Jeremiah's record of his ministry now jumps back to 605 B.C., the "fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign." He reminded the people that for 23 years (since about 627) he had been warning them to turn from their evil ways. Other prophets had warned them as well. Any punishment God now brought upon them would therefore be justified.

[Jeremiah 25:8-14](#) *"Now about the next 70 years . . ."* Because of Judah's sin, God would use his "deputy," the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, to punish them. Then, after 70 years of captivity, they would be set free and Babylon itself would be destroyed ([Jeremiah 25:12](#); see [Jeremiah 29:10](#); [2 Chron. 36:22-23](#); [Daniel 5](#)).

Nebuchadnezzar came to power in 605 B.C. and led the first group of Israelites captive that same year. Babylon would be conquered in 539, nearly 70 years later, by the Persian king Cyrus. The first exiles returned in 538, roughly 70 years after the first captives went to Babylon. Some scholars, however, date the 70 years of the captivity from 586, the date of the third and final deportation, to 516 when the new Temple was completed by the returned exiles (see [Zech. 1:12](#)).

Just as Nebuchadnezzar was God's "deputy" to judge Israel, so Cyrus would be his "anointed one" ([Isaiah 45:1](#)) to judge Babylon on Israel's behalf.

[Jeremiah 25:15-38](#) *God's wrath: One cup for all nations.* God gave Jeremiah the "cup of the LORD's fury" ([Isaiah 51:17](#); see [Rev. 14:10](#)) to pour in judgment on Judah and all other nations that rejected him ([Jeremiah 25:15-29](#)). If God would punish his own people, no other nation should expect to escape ([Jeremiah 25:29](#)). The "day of the LORD," the last great period of judgment on all nations, commonly referred to as the Tribulation, is identified here as "that day" ([Jeremiah 25:30-38](#); see [Isaiah: Background](#)).

[Jeremiah 26:1-6](#) *Temples, like Tabernacles, can be destroyed.* [Jeremiah 26:1-24](#) records the events surrounding Jeremiah's Temple sermon ([Jeremiah 7:1-8:3](#)) at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign (c. 608 B.C.). [Jeremiah 26:1-6](#) reiterates God's instruction for Jeremiah to "stand out in front of the Temple of the LORD" to deliver the sermon ([Jeremiah 26:2](#); see [Jeremiah 7:2](#)). Jeremiah was to warn that the Temple, just like the Tabernacle before it, would come under God's judgment.

[Jeremiah 26:7-24](#) *Prophets can be destroyed too.* Having heard his warning about the Temple, the priests, prophets, and people cried out for Jeremiah's blood and reported his sermon to the authorities ([Jeremiah 26:7-11](#)). Jeremiah warned them that he was speaking on God's behalf and called on them to repent ([Jeremiah 26:12-15](#)). The authorities recommended clemency, recalling how King Hezekiah had heeded Micah's warning and Jerusalem had been spared ([Jeremiah 26:16-19](#); compare [Jeremiah 26:18-19](#) and [Micah 3:12](#)). Uriah, a prophet contemporary with Jeremiah, had been killed by Jehoiakim ([Jeremiah 26:20-23](#)). Jeremiah himself was spared this time ([Jeremiah 26:24](#)) but was surely aware of the peril of his profession.

[Jeremiah 27:1-22](#) *He wears a yoke to warn the people.* The story now jumps from 608 to 593 B.C. (see [Jeremiah 28:1](#)). Nebuchadnezzar had become king of Babylon in 605. He had taken many Israelites captive in 605 and 597 and had deposed Jehoiakim's successor, Jehoiachin, replacing him with Zedekiah. Zedekiah had done Nebuchadnezzar's bidding at first but then began conspiring with other nations to overthrow Babylon ([Jeremiah 27:3](#)). (The KJV follows most Hebrew manuscripts and names Jehoiakim instead of Zedekiah in [Jeremiah 27:1](#).)

In response to Zedekiah's conspiracy against Babylon, Jeremiah put a yoke around his neck and declared to the assembled nations that it was God's sovereign will that they all serve Babylon ([Jeremiah 27:4-6](#)) until such time as Babylon itself was judged ([Jeremiah 27:7](#)). To resist serving Babylon would mean certain destruction by "war, famine, and disease" ([Jeremiah 27:8](#)).

Jeremiah then delivered the same warning to Zedekiah himself ([Jeremiah 27:12-15](#)) and to all the Israelites ([Jeremiah 27:16-22](#)). He warned all three audiences against the false prophets who were encouraging rebellion. A similar warning, given about the same time, is recorded in [Jeremiah 24](#).

[Jeremiah 28:1-17](#) *The prophecy and death of Hananiah the liar.* In the same year as the events of [Jeremiah 27](#), the prophet Hananiah predicted that the Israelites taken captive to Babylon in 605 and 597 would be home within two years ([Jeremiah 28:1-4](#)). Jeremiah expressed his sincere hope that the

exiles' stay in Babylon would indeed be brief ([Jeremiah 28:5-6](#)); yet, based on what God had said, he was skeptical of Hananiah's positive outlook ([Jeremiah 28:7-8](#)). He reiterated the ancient test of all such prophecies: The prophet is from the Lord only if his or her prophecy comes true ([Jeremiah 28:9](#); see [Deut. 18:20-22](#)).

Hananiah repeated his prophecy of peace, breaking Jeremiah's yoke for emphasis ([Jeremiah 28:10-11](#)). Jeremiah responded that, because of his false prophecy, Hananiah would die within the year ([Jeremiah 28:12-16](#)). Two months later, he was dead ([Jeremiah 28:17](#)).

Hananiah's specific word of hope for Jehoiachin ([Jeremiah 28:4](#)) was contradicted by Jeremiah (see exposition on [Jeremiah 22:24-30](#)). Jeremiah's version proved to be right (see [Jeremiah 52:31-34](#)).

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[Jeremiah 29:15-32](#) *False prophets will be punished.* Jeremiah's letter continued with warnings against false prophets and dire predictions of the fate of those who had ignored earlier warnings and stayed in Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 29:15-23](#)). Singled out for special rebuke was Shemaiah, an exile who had sent a letter to the leaders in Jerusalem urging them to silence Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 29:24-32](#)). He and all other false prophets would be severely punished.

[Jeremiah 30:1-11](#) *Jacob's trouble, Messiah's triumph.* It was the last months before Jerusalem's fall in 586 B.C. Zedekiah had revolted against Babylon in about 590-589 (see [Jeremiah 52:1-3](#)). Babylon had begun besieging Jerusalem in 588 (see [Jeremiah 52:4](#)). Famine and pestilence raged throughout Judah (see [Jeremiah 52:6](#)), and Jeremiah languished in prison (see [Jeremiah 32:1-2](#)). Amid this crisis, Jeremiah prophesied concerning God's ultimate plans for his people ([Jeremiah 30:33](#)). At the end of earthly history, God will bring both the northern and southern kingdoms back from captivity ([Jeremiah 30:1-3](#)). First, however, will come the "time of trouble for my people Israel," which most scholars identify with the Tribulation ([Jeremiah 30:4-7](#)). But in "that day" ([Jeremiah 30:7-8](#); see [Jeremiah 25:15-38](#)), Jacob (the nation of Israel) will be saved out of his trouble by a future King David, who is Christ the Messiah ([Jeremiah 30:9](#); see [2 Samuel 7:12-16](#) and exposition on [Isaiah 11:1-12:6](#) and [Luke 1:69](#)).

God would "discipline" his people but would not "destroy" them. Rather, he would "save" them "from distant lands," bringing them back from exile ([Jeremiah 30:10-11](#)). This return would take place both in the historical context of that day and in the end times (see [Purpose](#)).

[Jeremiah 30:12-24](#) *Problem, prescription, and promise.* Judah's sin problem was "incurable" ([Jeremiah 30:12-14](#)). God's judgment was the only possible prescription ([Jeremiah 30:15](#)). After judgment, however, Judah would be restored ([Jeremiah 30:16-17](#)) and Jerusalem would be rebuilt ([Jeremiah 30:18-22](#)). [Jeremiah 30:23-24](#) echoes the warning of [Jeremiah 23:19-20](#).

[Jeremiah 31:1-14](#) *What a day that will be!* As a shepherd gathers his sheep ([Jeremiah 31:10](#)), God will one day restore Israel to its land. Like a loving Father ([Jeremiah 31:1, 9](#)), he will "draw" them back from captivity ([Jeremiah 31:3](#)). It will be a time of rejoicing and prosperity.

[Jeremiah 31:15-25](#) *"I hear your weeping."* God was aware of his people's great suffering at the hand of Babylon, here symbolized by their deportation from Ramah ([Jeremiah 31:15](#); see [Jeremiah 40:1](#)). He heard their cries of repentance ([Jeremiah 31:18-19](#)) and promised to restore them to their land ([Jeremiah 31:16-17, 20-25](#)). Matthew would see in the deportation a foreshadowing of the slaughter at Bethlehem after Christ's birth (see [Matthew 2:16-18](#)).

[Jeremiah 31:26-30](#) *Was it a dream?* With the amazement of one who awakens from a pleasant dream ([Jeremiah 31:26](#)), Jeremiah again noted God's promise of restoration ([Jeremiah 31:27-30](#)). As he had destroyed Israel for its sins, he would now build it up again ([Jeremiah 31:28](#); see [Jeremiah 1:10](#)). The future time of renewal would be a time of individual responsibility before God ([Jeremiah 31:29-30](#); see exposition on ^s[Ezekiel 18:1-18](#)).

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) *A covenant written on hearts.* The Lord then made an amazing announcement: "The day will come . . . when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah" ([Jeremiah 31:31](#)). This covenant would be unlike the present Mosaic covenant ([Jeremiah 31:32](#)), in that God would "write" it on his people's hearts ([Jeremiah 31:33](#)). It would bring about a new kind of relationship with God and a permanent remission of sin ([Jeremiah 31:34](#)). While the NT clearly identifies this New Covenant as God's promise of forgiveness through the death of Christ on the cross, it will be offered to Israel in a special way during the Millennium (see exposition on ^s[Romans 11:11-32](#) and on ^s[Hebrews 8:1-13](#); see also [Biblical Covenants](#); [Isaiah 59:20-21](#); [Ezekiel 16:60-63](#); [Ezekiel 37:26-28](#)).

» **See also:** [Illustration: New Covenant, The](#)

[Jeremiah 31:35-40](#) *A future as sure as the sun and moon.* With the last of his people headed for exile, God promised they would never cease to be a nation. The promise was as dependable as the patterns of nature ([Jeremiah 31:35-37](#)). Citing specific landmarks within Jerusalem, God promised that his Holy City would one day be rebuilt ([Jeremiah 31:38-40](#)).

[Jeremiah 32:1-15](#) *Jeremiah buys a field.* It was now 587 B.C. Jerusalem was under siege (see [Jeremiah 39:1](#); [Jeremiah 52:4](#)), and "Jeremiah was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace" ([Jeremiah 32:2](#)). Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah that he would be defeated by Nebuchadnezzar and would be taken captive to Babylon, and Zedekiah had responded by imprisoning Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 32:1-5](#)). At God's direction, Jeremiah purchased a field in his hometown, which by then was already occupied by Babylon ([Jeremiah 32:6-12](#)). To show his confidence that his descendants would someday regain the land, he took great care to preserve the deed ([Jeremiah 32:13-15](#)).

Jeremiah's actual incarceration in the "courtyard of the guard" is recorded in [Jeremiah 37:21](#). While he was imprisoned, Jeremiah trusted his business affairs to Baruch ([Jeremiah 32:11-12](#)), his personal secretary (see [Jeremiah 36:4](#); [Jeremiah 45](#)).

[Jeremiah 32:16-25](#) *"Lord, why did I buy that field?"* Jeremiah had unquestioningly obeyed God's command to buy the field. As he praised God ([Jeremiah 32:16-24](#)), he admitted to being perplexed as to why God had told him to make such a purchase ([Jeremiah 32:25](#)). On "children suffer for their parents' sins" ([Jeremiah 32:18](#)) see exposition on [Ezekiel 18:1-18](#).

[Jeremiah 32:26-44](#) *"Because someday you'll all buy fields again."* The Lord replied that, though Israel's sin had provoked him to give their land to Babylon ([Jeremiah 32:26-35](#)), he would one day restore it to them and they would prosper ([Jeremiah 32:36-44](#)); fields would once again be bought, just as Jeremiah had bought his field ([Jeremiah 32:43-44](#)). Again God promised a new covenant ([Jeremiah 32:38-40](#)).

[Jeremiah 33:1-13](#) *"Great and mighty things! Just ask me!"* As Jeremiah's imprisonment dragged on, God's word came to him again. Just as the sovereign God had created all things, he was able to restore his people to their land and give them prosperity ([Jeremiah 33:4-13](#)), causing all nations to praise him ([Jeremiah 33:9](#)).

[Jeremiah 33:14-26](#) *"The LORD is our righteousness!"* Once again God promised to send a Messiah to restore David's throne and save Israel from its foes. Israel would then say, "The LORD is our righteousness!" For by his death he would make his people righteous ([Jeremiah 33:16](#); see [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#); [1 Cor. 1:30](#); [2 Cor. 5:21](#)). The promise of Messiah ([Jeremiah 33:15, 17](#)) and the restoration of both Israel and Judah ([Jeremiah 33:25-26](#)) were as certain as the laws of nature.

[Jeremiah 34:1-7](#) *"You'll be captured and carried off but not killed."* As Babylon and all its allies closed in on Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 34:1, 6-7](#)), Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that all efforts against Nebuchadnezzar would be futile. Even the king would be exiled to Babylon, though he would be allowed to die in peace (see [Jeremiah 52:11](#)). [2 Kings 25:6-7](#) fulfills both Jeremiah's prophecy that Zedekiah would see Nebuchadnezzar ([Jeremiah 34:2-5](#)) and Ezekiel's prophecy that he would not see Babylon itself (see [Ezekiel 12:13](#)).

[Jeremiah 34:8-22](#) *"You didn't free them, so he won't free you!"* The law of Moses decreed that Hebrew slaves should be freed after six years ([Jeremiah 34:13-14](#); see [Leviticus 25:39-46](#); [Deut. 15:12](#)). Israel had not observed this law ([Jeremiah 34:14](#)) until very recently, when King Zedekiah had decreed that they do so ([Jeremiah 34:8-10](#)). The reform had been short-lived, however, and the people had reenslaved their fellow Israelites ([Jeremiah 34:11](#)). God decreed, therefore, that the whole nation would become slaves to Babylon ([Jeremiah 34:12-22](#)). Because they had not freed their slaves, Israel would be "free"—free to die ([Jeremiah 34:17](#))!

[Jeremiah 35:1-11](#) *The Recabites: Faithful to their father.* The story now jumps back in time to the days of Jehoiakim (c. 607 B.C.). At God's direction, Jeremiah offered wine to a group of Recabites, a nomadic tribe that had sought protection from Israel against Babylon. True to the teaching of their ancestor Jonadab, the Recabites refused the wine ([Jeremiah 35:1-11](#)). Jonadab lived nearly 250 years before this time (see [2 Kings 10:15-16, 23](#)).

Jeremiah 35:12-19 *The Israelites: Unfaithful to their Father.* Unlike the Recabites, Israel had been unfaithful to its Father. Therefore Israel would be judged ([Jeremiah 35:17](#)), while the Recabites would go free ([Jeremiah 35:18-19](#)).

Jeremiah 36:1-19 *Baruch records and reads the words.* In about 605 B.C., Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, recorded all of Jeremiah's prophecies concerning Israel and Judah. Because Jeremiah had been barred from entering the Temple area, he directed Baruch to go there and read the scroll in public ([Jeremiah 36:1-10](#)). He hoped that Judah would repent ([Jeremiah 36:3, 7](#)). When Baruch read the scroll to the palace officials, they were terrified. Suspecting that the king would be displeased when they showed him the scroll, they urged Baruch and Jeremiah to hide.

Jeremiah 36:20-32 *Jehoiakim hears, hates, and burns the words.* As feared, Jehoiakim rejected Jeremiah's words, burned the scroll, and demanded the prophet's arrest—but the Lord hid and protected him ([Jeremiah 36:20-26](#)). Jeremiah then rewrote the scroll, adding more words of judgment: Because of his contempt for God's Word, Jehoiakim would die in disgrace (see exposition on [§][Jeremiah 22:13-23](#)) and none of his sons would succeed him ([Jeremiah 36:30](#)).

Jeremiah 37:1-10 *The king's new idea: Prayer.* The narrative now jumps ahead again to the last months before Jerusalem's fall, prior to Jeremiah's imprisonment ([Jeremiah 37:4](#)). As suggested by Jeremiah's prophecy (see [Jeremiah 36:30](#)), Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin had reigned only 90 days before being led captive to Babylon along with many of Judah's best and brightest. Zedekiah, installed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar ([Jeremiah 37:1](#)), had reigned for about 10 years and had consistently rejected Jeremiah's warnings ([Jeremiah 37:2](#); see [Jeremiah 21:1-10](#); [Jeremiah 24](#); [Jeremiah 27](#)). Hoping now to win God's favor, Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to pray for the nation ([Jeremiah 37:3](#)). [Jeremiah 21:1-10](#) records a similar request for prayer by Zedekiah at about the same time. When Egypt came to Judah's aid ([Jeremiah 37:5](#)), the Babylonians temporarily lifted their siege, but Jeremiah predicted that the Egyptians would soon retreat and Babylon would return and destroy Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 37:6-10](#)).

Jeremiah 37:11-21 *The prophet's new home: Prison.* During the time when Babylon had retreated from Jerusalem because of the Egyptian threat ([Jeremiah 37:5](#)), Jeremiah ventured three miles northeast of Jerusalem to his hometown, Anathoth, which was apparently in Babylonian hands, to claim some personal property ([Jeremiah 37:11-12](#)). Falsely accused of defecting to the enemy, he was imprisoned ([Jeremiah 37:13-15](#)). In prison he was secretly consulted by Zedekiah, who publicly opposed him. Jeremiah again warned Zedekiah that he would be captured ([Jeremiah 37:17](#)). He also defended his track record as a prophet and begged to be moved from the "dungeon" ([Jeremiah 37:16, 18-20](#)). Zedekiah relented and moved Jeremiah to the "courtyard of the guard" ([Jeremiah 37:21](#)), from where he would later make a second, divinely directed purchase of property in Anathoth ([Jeremiah 32](#)).

Jeremiah 38:1-13 *His second new home: A cistern.* Because he kept on advocating defection to the Babylonians (see exposition on [§][Jeremiah 27:1-22](#)), some government officials imprisoned Jeremiah in an underground cistern ([Jeremiah 38:1-6](#)). Zedekiah did nothing to prevent this from happening ([Jeremiah 38:5](#)). Later, however, at the suggestion of a royal official named Ebed-melech, Zedekiah ordered that Jeremiah be taken out of the cistern ([Jeremiah 38:7-13](#)).

Jeremiah 38:14-28 *"Tell me the truth and I won't kill you!"* Once again under Zedekiah's protection ([Jeremiah 38:14-16](#)), Jeremiah implored him to save himself and the city by surrendering to Babylon; not to do so would mean disaster ([Jeremiah 38:17-18](#)). When Zedekiah expressed

reservations about this advice ([Jeremiah 38:19](#)), Jeremiah repeated the advice and the warning ([Jeremiah 38:20-23](#)). Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to keep their meeting a secret, and Jeremiah did so ([Jeremiah 38:24-27](#)). Jeremiah would remain in the courtyard of the guard until Jerusalem's fall ([Jeremiah 38:28](#)).

[Jeremiah 39:1-10](#) *Jerusalem destroyed, Judah exiled.* The time of God's judgment had come. Having been under siege for about a year and a half, Jerusalem was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar's army ([Jeremiah 39:1-3](#)). Zedekiah and his men fled but were captured. Zedekiah was blinded and led captive to Babylon ([Jeremiah 39:4-7](#)). Jerusalem was then destroyed, and the rest of the people were led captive—except for the poor, who were allowed to remain and occupy some of the property of those taken captive ([Jeremiah 39:8-10](#); see [2 Kings 25](#); [Lament. 1-5](#)).

[Jeremiah 39:11-18](#) *Jeremiah released, Ebed-melech rewarded.* Jeremiah had been taken captive along with the rest of the people to Ramah, about five miles north of Jerusalem and evidently a staging area for the trip to Babylon (see [Jeremiah 40:1](#) and exposition on [Jeremiah 31:15-25](#)). He was then released and put in the care of Gedaliah, the Israelite who had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar as governor over the Jews remaining in Judah ([Jeremiah 39:11-14](#); see [Jeremiah 40:5](#)). Jeremiah told Ebed-melech, who had escaped the destruction, that his escape was a divine reward for his earlier intervention on Jeremiah's behalf ([Jeremiah 39:15-18](#); see [Jeremiah 38:7-13](#)). Gedaliah's father, Ahikam, had also protected Jeremiah (see [Jeremiah 26:24](#)).

[Jeremiah 40:1-12](#) *The good government of Gedaliah.* The story of Jeremiah's capture is told ([Jeremiah 40:1](#)), and the story of his release and coming to live with Gedaliah is retold ([Jeremiah 40:2-6](#)). The poor who had been left in the land came to Gedaliah for encouragement and direction ([Jeremiah 40:7-8](#)). He encouraged them to live peaceably in the land and be loyal to Babylon ([Jeremiah 40:9-10](#)). Many Israelites who had fled from Nebuchadnezzar to nearby countries returned and felt secure under Gedaliah's brief rule ([Jeremiah 40:11-12](#)).

[Jeremiah 40:13-41:18](#) *Gedaliah assassinated.* The Ammonites, perhaps coveting Judean land, commissioned Ishmael, a member of Judah's royal family, to murder Gedaliah. When Johanan told Gedaliah of the plot, he refused to believe it ([Jeremiah 40:13-16](#)), yet he was assassinated—less than three months after taking office ([Jeremiah 41:1-3](#)). Having tasted blood, for no apparent reason Ishmael and his men then killed 70 fellow Israelites on their way to Jerusalem to mourn the pillaged Temple ([Jeremiah 41:4-9](#)). Ishmael tried to take the entire population of Mizpah (presumably including Jeremiah) back to Ammon, but Johanan rescued them ([Jeremiah 41:10-15](#)).

Fearing that Babylon would take vengeance for Gedaliah's death, the surviving Israelites fled toward Egypt but stopped for a while near Bethlehem ([Jeremiah 41:16-18](#)).

[Jeremiah 42:1-22](#) *God's word: "Don't go to Egypt."* Johanan asked Jeremiah to seek divine guidance as to what he and his people should do. They promised to do whatever the Lord said, whether they liked it or not ([Jeremiah 42:1-6](#)). The Lord said they should remain in Judah. If they remained, he would end their punishment and would protect and prosper them; if they disobeyed and fled to Egypt, they would die ([Jeremiah 42:7-22](#)).

[Jeremiah 43:1-7](#) *Judah's response: "We're going anyway."* Still fearing reprisal from Babylon, the people accused Jeremiah of conspiring against them by telling them to remain in Judah. Under Johanan's leadership, they fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them.

[Jeremiah 43:8-13](#) *The sign of the hidden rocks.* Soon after Jeremiah and his fellow Israelites arrived in Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied—using large rocks as visual aids—that Babylon would invade Egypt as well. Faithless Judah would find no refuge in Egypt.

[Jeremiah 44:1-14](#) *Idolaters in Judah, idolaters in Egypt.* Perhaps some five years after Jerusalem's fall, Jeremiah gave his last prophecy to the Jews in Egypt. Just as their fathers had served false gods in Canaan ([Jeremiah 44:1-6](#)), they were proudly worshiping Egyptian gods ([Jeremiah 44:7-10](#)). Therefore, though they had fled to Egypt, they would not escape God's wrath ([Jeremiah 44:11-14](#)).

[Jeremiah 44:15-30](#) *No to God, yes to Ishtar.* The people unanimously rejected Jeremiah's warning: Crediting past prosperity to their foreign gods, they stated proudly that they would continue their idolatry. The "Queen of Heaven" ([Jeremiah 44:17](#); see [Jeremiah 7:18](#)) was probably Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love.

Jeremiah reminded his people that idolatry had brought on God's wrath and the fall of Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 44:20-23](#)). Because they were persisting in idolatry, God would destroy them in Egypt ([Jeremiah 44:24-27](#)), with only a small remnant escaping ([Jeremiah 44:28](#)). As a sign of their own final judgment, Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt, under whom they had found refuge, would himself fall ([Jeremiah 44:30](#); see [Jeremiah 46:13-26](#)). Hophra was deposed and killed in 569 B.C., after a serious military defeat. About a year later, Nebuchadnezzar's armies invaded and defeated Egypt.

[Jeremiah 45:1-5](#) *Baruch rebuked.* The narrative now jumps back to about 605 B.C., after Baruch had recorded the scroll which Jehoiakim would destroy (see [Jeremiah 36:4-8](#)). Baruch had apparently sought career advancement ([Jeremiah 45:5](#)), only to find himself associated with the despised Jeremiah. God reminded Baruch that the present order of society was doomed; he would be well advised to seek God's glory, not his own.

[Jeremiah 46:1-28](#) *Egypt: Defeated and doomed for more defeat.* [Jeremiah 46-51](#) includes prophecies from various times in Jeremiah's ministry, against various nations that had opposed Israel. First called to account was Egypt. Jeremiah ridiculed the mighty Egypt for its defeat at Carchemish ([Jeremiah 46:1-12](#)) and predicted a future defeat by Babylon ([Jeremiah 46:13-26](#)). Their great Pharaoh would be derided by his own troops for making much noise but having no power ([Jeremiah 46:17](#)). (Pharaoh had made loud claims of his ability to defeat Babylon but had never made good on those claims.) Meanwhile, Israelite exiles in Egypt and other foreign lands would be rescued by their God ([Jeremiah 46:27-28](#)).

[Jeremiah 47:1-7](#) *Philistia: God's sword won't be silent.* Sometime before Pharaoh's march northward in 609 B.C. ([Jeremiah 47:1](#); see [2 Kings 23:29-34](#)), Jeremiah prophesied that Philistia, long-time hater of the Jews, would be destroyed by an enemy from the north, meaning Babylon. God's sword of judgment could not be silent until Israel's ancient foe was destroyed ([Jeremiah 47:6-7](#)).

[Jeremiah 48:1-47](#) *Moab: The wings of death.* Moab and Ammon, the two nations resulting from Lot's incest with his daughters, were under an ancient curse because of their ill treatment of Israel (see

exposition on [§Neh. 13:1-3](#)). Moab, once proud and self-sufficient ([Jeremiah 48:17](#)), would be shamed ([Jeremiah 48:1](#)). Though the Moabites were given "wings" to flee their attackers ([Jeremiah 48:9](#)), Babylon would spread its wings of death over them ([Jeremiah 48:40](#)). The Moabites, like the Philistines, would shave their heads in sorrow ([Jeremiah 48:37](#); see [Jeremiah 47:5](#)).

Moab did, indeed, cease to be a nation after its destruction by Babylon. During the Millennium, however, it will be restored ([Jeremiah 48:47](#)).

[Jeremiah 49:1-6](#) *Ammon: "Give back the land!"* The self-trusting Ammonites would be destroyed, but like the Moabites, they would be restored during the Millennium ([Jeremiah 49:6](#)). Their destruction would allow Israel to reclaim the territory Ammon had taken ([Jeremiah 49:1-2](#)). Molech (Hebrew *Milcom*) the Ammonite god, like Chemosh the Moabite god, would be "exiled" along with his worshipers ([Jeremiah 49:3](#); see [Jeremiah 48:7](#)). The name of Ammon survives as present-day Amman, capital of Jordan.

[Jeremiah 49:7-22](#) *Edom: Punished for pride and prejudice.* Edom, southeast of Judah, would be judged for its pride ([Jeremiah 49:16](#)). It would not escape judgment ([Jeremiah 49:10](#)), especially considering that many innocent people had already suffered as God's wrath was poured out ([Jeremiah 49:12](#)). Amid the destruction, however, God would care for the widows and orphans ([Jeremiah 49:11](#)).

The Edomites, descendants of Esau, denied passage to Israel as they journeyed toward Canaan (see exposition on [§Numbers 20:14-21](#)). Subsequently, they had either helped or failed to resist various nations that attacked Israel, climaxing in their apparent refusal to help when Judah fell in 586 B.C. (see [Ezekiel 35:5](#)).

[Jeremiah 49:7-22](#) parallels [Obadiah 1:1-9](#), which probably refers to an earlier time when Edom failed to help their Israelite brothers.

[Jeremiah 49:23-39](#) *Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam.* Syria, whose capital was Damascus ([Jeremiah 49:23-27](#)), had been both ally and enemy to Israel. It fell to Assyria in Isaiah's time, and in Jeremiah's time was controlled by Babylon. God would "start a fire" in Damascus. The fulfillment of this prophecy is unknown.

Kedar and Hazor ([Jeremiah 49:28-33](#)), nomadic peoples to the east, wealthy and with no enemies to fear, would be destroyed by Babylon as well.

The Elamites ([Jeremiah 49:34-39](#)), famous as archers, would have their bows broken by God. But they, like the Moabites and Ammonites, would participate in the Millennium ([Jeremiah 49:39](#)).

[Jeremiah 50:1-51:64](#) *Babylon: Her time will come.* In 593 B.C. ([Jeremiah 51:59](#)), Jeremiah wrote a lengthy prophecy against Babylon, most recent oppressor of Israel. Though God had told his people to submit to Babylon as his instrument of judgment, Babylon was sinful too and would be judged:

"Flee, and you'll find compassion" ([50:1-20](#)). Babylon was doomed for destruction ([Jeremiah 50:1-3](#); see exposition on [§Jeremiah 25:8-14](#)) at a future time that would also be a time of repentance among the Israelite exiles ([Jeremiah 50:4-7](#)). The exiles should be ready to escape that day of great destruction ([Jeremiah 50:8-10](#)). Babylon was to be destroyed because of the pleasure it took in punishing God's people ([Jeremiah 50:11-18](#); see exposition on [§Isaiah 47:1-15](#)). By contrast, God would show Israel

great compassion ([Jeremiah 50:19-20](#)). [Jeremiah 50:5, 20](#) echoes the New Covenant ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

A broken hammer, a feeble king (50:21-46). Babylon, the "mightiest hammer in all the earth," would be "broken and shattered" by God ([Jeremiah 50:23](#)). Its destruction would be celebrated by the returned exiles in Jerusalem ([Jeremiah 50:28](#)). While punishing Babylon for its pride ([Jeremiah 50:29-32](#)), God would come to the defense of his people ([Jeremiah 50:33-34](#)). Because of its idolatry ([Jeremiah 50:38](#)), Babylon's destruction would be as thorough as that of Sodom and Gomorrah ([Jeremiah 50:40](#)). Babylon's king would be rendered feeble by news of the impending destruction ([Jeremiah 50:43](#)).

Babylon's idols vs. Israel's Creator God (51:1-19). Babylon would be destroyed for its treatment of Israel and Judah, for God would not forsake his people ([Jeremiah 51:1-5](#)), who should therefore be ready to flee when judgment comes ([Jeremiah 51:6](#)). Babylon's sin had affected the whole world ([Jeremiah 51:7](#)), but now, at the command of the sovereign God ([Jeremiah 51:15-16, 19](#)), both Babylon and her idols would be destroyed ([Jeremiah 51:17-18](#)). John echoes [Jeremiah 51:13](#) in his description of "Babylon the Great" in Revelation (see [Rev. 17:1, 15](#)).

Babylon's armies vs. God's battle-ax (51:20-44). God had used Babylon to punish his people and the surrounding nations, but they had gone too far in their destruction ([Jeremiah 51:24-25](#)). God would now use his "battle-ax," Cyrus of Persia, to punish Babylon ([Jeremiah 51:20-23](#)). He calls on other nations to join the fight against Babylon ([Jeremiah 50:27-33](#)). They would free all the nations Babylon had "swallowed" ([Jeremiah 51:34, 44](#)).

"Flee quickly; her destruction is sure" (51:45-58). Israel could begin preparing to flee, with the full assurance that God would destroy Babylon—to the great joy of all the righteous in heaven and on earth.

"Read it; then throw it in the river!" (51:59-64). Jeremiah wrote his prophecy against Babylon on a scroll and gave it to Seraiah, brother of Baruch (see [Jeremiah 32:12](#)), to be taken to Babylon. Seraiah was to read the prophecy in public, then tie a rock to it and throw it in the river, symbolizing Babylon's destruction.

The letter was sent in 593 B.C., after two groups of Jews had already been taken captive to Babylon in 605 and 597 B.C. Zedekiah had been summoned to Babylon, and Seraiah went with him as his "quartermaster." (See exposition on [Jeremiah 29:1-14](#).)

[Jeremiah 52:1-11](#) *Purged from his presence.* Sometime after Jerusalem's fall, an unknown writer or compiler (see [Author](#)) reflected on the events surrounding Judah's last days. (See [2 Kings 24:18-25:30](#).)

Zedekiah would be the last in a long line of evil kings who, along with the nation as a whole, had provoked God's anger. When Zedekiah ignored Jeremiah's advice and rebelled against Babylon, God used the occasion to finally "banish" Judah "from his presence" ([Jeremiah 52:1-3](#)). Having effectively controlled Judah since coming to the throne in 605, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Jerusalem in 588. After a year and a half of siege and starvation, the walls were penetrated and Zedekiah and his army fled ([Jeremiah 52:4-7](#)). Zedekiah was captured, blinded, and imprisoned in Babylon till his death ([Jeremiah 52:8-11](#)).

[Jeremiah 52:12-23](#) *They burn the beloved city.* A month and a day after penetrating Jerusalem's walls, the Babylonians burned the Temple and "all the important buildings," broke down the city walls, and led captive most of the remaining people ([Jeremiah 52:12-16](#)). They took the gold, silver, and bronze furnishings from the burned Temple and carried them to Babylon.

[Jeremiah 52:24-34](#) *Leaders killed, captives counted, a king released.* As Judah was led captive, several of its leaders were executed ([Jeremiah 52:24-27](#)). Nebuchadnezzar took a total of 4,600 captives (plus women and children) in three deportations. If the time spans given do not include the king's inaugural year of 605 B.C., they would correspond to 597, 586, and 581. The deportation of 581 may have been part of the reprisal anticipated by the Jews who fled to Egypt after the assassination of Gedaliah (see exposition on [§Jeremiah 43:1-7](#)).

The book ends on a hopeful note: King Jehoiachin, taken captive in 597, was released in 560 and treated with kindness for the rest of his life. (He would have been 55 in 560; there is no record of him among the returning exiles, 22 years later.)

JEREMIAH

(PEOPLE TO REMEMBER FROM JEREMIAH)

Key Fact: Prophet to Judah during its last days

Father: Hilkiyah ([Jeremiah 1:1](#))

Total Bible References: 134

Key References: [Jeremiah 1-52](#); [2 Chron. 35:25](#); [2 Chron. 36:11](#); [Ezra 1:1](#); [Daniel 9:2](#); [Matthew 2:17-18](#); [Matthew 27:9-10](#)

Jeremiah Speaks

"Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world." How long has it been since he spoke those words to me as a young priest in my hometown of Anathoth? At least 40 years! With a little shame I recall my first reaction to that divine call: I declined it on the basis of my youth and lack of knowledge. But he quickly answered both objections: "Don't say that. . . . See, I have put my words in your mouth!" ([Jeremiah 1:5-7, 9](#))

Now I find myself in a foreign country, brought here against my will. I said 40 years, but it seems 40 lifetimes. I've written two books (the second actually an expansion of the first, which was burned by an unappreciative reader). ([Jeremiah 43:5-7](#); [Jeremiah 36:2, 23, 28](#))

Maybe I should write a third book and call it *Heads of State I Have Known*. Let's see, that would include Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Gedaliah, and Johanan! Five kings and two governors—quite an impressive list! If I wrote such a book, I should probably include in it all my prophecies concerning those key leaders. ([Jeremiah 13:18-19](#); [Jeremiah 36:29](#); [Jeremiah 37:16-17](#); [Jeremiah 39:11-12](#); [Jeremiah 40:6](#); [Jeremiah 42:1-2](#); [2 Chron. 35:25](#))

I don't weep over Jerusalem anymore. There is no need to. But I am deeply grieved over the deplorable paganism my people have fallen into here in Egypt. When will we ever learn? It was for this kind of abomination that God destroyed our country in the first place. ([Jeremiah 9:1](#); [Jeremiah 44:1-30](#))

I often wonder, *Would things have been different had not the godly Josiah been killed?* I still mourn for him. ([2 Chron. 35:23-25](#))

Often, as I sit here by myself at sunset looking north to the beloved but now destroyed Holy City, my heart is overwhelmed with loneliness and pain. But then I'm reminded of those thrilling words God gave me right after its destruction: "I still dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the

LORD never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day." ([Lament. 3:21-23](#))

Spiritual Lessons from Jeremiah

- There is no excuse for not pursuing God's will for our lives. Moses pleaded *infirmity* for not obeying God ([Exodus 4:10](#)); Jeremiah pleaded *immaturity* ([Jeremiah 1:6](#)). In both cases, God overruled their objections, promising that he would put his very words in their mouths (compare [Jeremiah 1:7-9](#) with [Exodus 4:11-12](#)).
- God forbade Jeremiah to marry ([Jeremiah 16:2](#)) but commanded Hosea to take a wife ([Hosea 1:2](#)). We must all find God's unique will for our lives (see [1 Cor. 7:7](#)).
- Paul desired to "know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead," to "learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death" ([Phil. 3:10](#)). Jeremiah experienced such fellowship centuries before Paul wrote those words. Note the similarities between the sufferings of Jeremiah and of Jesus; both were
 - Persecuted or rejected by
 - their families ([Jeremiah 12:6](#); [John 7:5](#))
 - their hometowns ([Jeremiah 11:21-23](#); [Luke 4:16-29](#))
 - religious leaders ([Jeremiah 20:1-3](#); [John 7:45-52](#))
 - political leaders ([Jeremiah 38:4-6](#); [Luke 13:31-32](#))
 - Accused of treason ([Jeremiah 37:11-15](#); [Luke 23:1-2](#))
 - Ridiculed ([Jeremiah 20:7-8](#); [Luke 23:11](#))
 - Even amid such suffering, however, God is faithful ([Lament. 3:21-23](#)).

Key Verses

" 'O Sovereign LORD,' I said, 'I can't speak for you! I'm too young!' 'Don't say that,' the LORD replied, 'for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and take care of you. I, the LORD, have spoken!' " ([Jeremiah 1:6-8](#)).