

JEREMIAH

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

The first verse states it is **Jeremiah's words which fill the book**. However, many scholars challenge Jeremiah's authorship and credit a scribe instead. This is not out of the realm of possibilities, for we do know from Jer. 36:4 that Baruch wrote what Jeremiah dictated to him. Scribes were common back in that time and were well trained to accurately record the original message. Therefore, we can trust what this book says as being Jeremiah's content and intent. One last mention of differing authorship regards chapter 52, which is most likely written by someone else. Nearly identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30, this ending chapter of Jeremiah is believed to have been written by an editor to emphasize the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies regarding the siege of Jerusalem and carrying off of exiles to Babylon. However, some challenge that Jeremiah likely wrote 1 and 2 Kings as well as the book of Jeremiah, so then there would be consistency in writing, explaining the similarities of the endings of both books.

Jeremiah (meaning "Yahweh exalts" or "Yahweh loosens") was a priest's son living in the town of Anathoth. This is the same town where Abiathar, one of the priests supporting Adonijah's grab for David's throne, was sent by King Solomon (1 Kgs 2:26-27). Jeremiah possibly descended from Abiathar and also Eli, the priest in charge of the ark of the covenant at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:3, 14:3; 1 Kgs 2:27). Though Jeremiah was from a priestly family, it is unlikely he actually served as a priest, for he was called to be a prophet at the young age of seventeen or eighteen. Known as the "weeping prophet," Jeremiah demonstrates his humanity as he struggles with his calling, endures persecutions from his own people, stands firm in what the Lord tells him to speak, and deeply mourns for what his people must suffer.

The writing of Jeremiah spans about 40 years, from the time of his call in approx. **626 B.C. to shortly after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 B.C.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The times in which Jeremiah lived were tumultuous. Though Assyria had been one of the most powerful empires, it was overextended, weakening, and experiencing God's judgment for sin (Isa. 10:12, 14:24-25; Nah. 2:8-3:19). As Babylon rose in power, Egypt worked to maintain its own strength in the region. Caught in the middle of the power struggle between Assyria and Egypt was Judah. However, the book of Jeremiah clearly explains that Judah's demise was her own spiritual decline and judgment from the Lord.

When Jeremiah was called as a prophet, it was in the midst of Josiah’s spiritual reforms. However, Josiah’s revival efforts didn’t last past his own death, when the people returned to their previous idolatries and injustices led in large part by the kings and priests. In this climate, Jeremiah raised his voice and stood against the false prophets of his day.

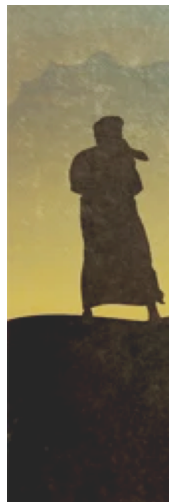
SOME GEOGRAPHIC & HISTORICAL HELP



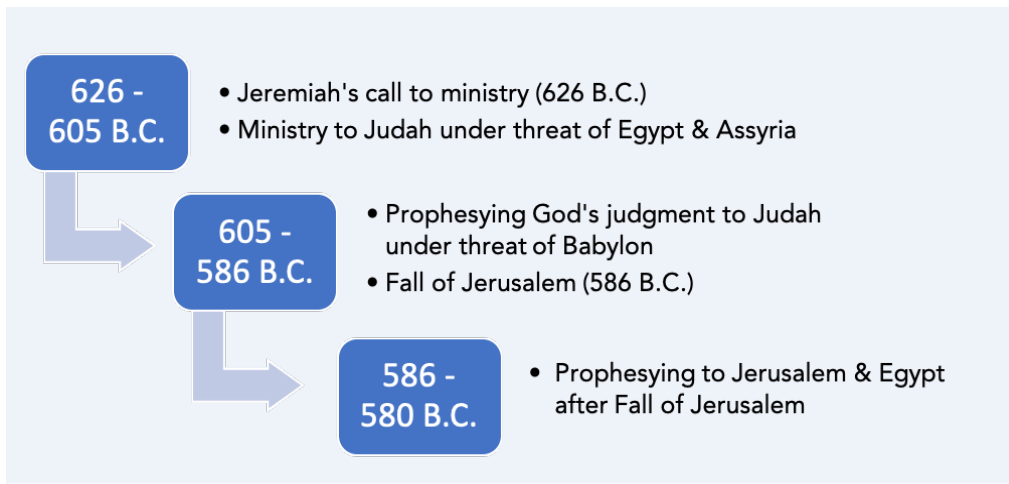
Jeremiah prophesied mostly to the nation of **Judah** and its capital city of **Jerusalem**.

But, the Lord also gave him words concerning **surrounding nations**.

Kings During Jeremiah’s Time



- **King Josiah (640-609 BC)**
 - Good king – began reforms in Judah, but reforms didn’t stick
- **King Jehoiakim (609-598 BC)**
 - Ruthless against those that prophesied against him
 - Sliced Jeremiah’s prophetic scrolls & threw them into the fire
- **King Jehoiachin (598 BC)**
 - Reigned 3 months & taken to Babylon
 - Jeremiah prophesied no children to follow on throne
- **King Zedekiah (597-587 BC)**
 - Weak king installed by Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)
 - Seek Jeremiah’s advice, then allow enemies to persecute



Timeline of Jeremiah's Ministry

THE UNIQUENESS OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah is a special book! Not only do we get "insider" information about the internal struggles and heart cries of this tender prophet, the book is unique in the following:

- More is known about the person of Jeremiah than any other prophet
 - His family and birthplace
 - The nature of his calling
- Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible, using more Hebrew words than any other book. Yep, it's longer than Psalms!!
- Uses a wide variety of literary forms
 - Narratives
 - Oracles
 - Complaints
 - Symbolic actions
 - Time references
 - Friends and enemies
 - Poetry
 - Hymns
 - Letter writing
 - Sermons

Timeline of Jeremiah's Ministry

LITERARY STRUCTURE

This book also presents unique challenges in how it is arranged. The chapters are NOT arranged chronologically nor necessarily by topic. There are several ways to show the structure of Jeremiah, but here are a few which will help you understand what you're reading as you go along.

AN OUTLINE OF JEREMIAH
(From International Inductive Study Bible)

- Ch. 1: Introduction and call
- Ch. 2-38: Judah's Sin & God's Warning to Return
- Ch. 39-45: Jerusalem's Fall & Judah's Uprooting
- Ch. 46-51: Jeremiah's Prophecy Concerning the Nations
- Ch. 52: Judah's Final Days of Exile

Date	Topic	Chapter
627 BC	The Call of Jeremiah	1
	Jeremiah Declares Judah Forsakes God	2-6
	Jeremiah's Message at the Temple Gate	7-10
622 BC	Jeremiah Proclaims God's Covenant	11 - 12
609 BC	Jeremiah Proclaims Covenant Is Broken	13 - 20
	Jeremiah Prophesies against Egypt	46
	Jeremiah Prophesies against Philistia	47
594 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Moab	48
	Jeremiah Prophesies against Ammon	49
588 BC	Jeremiah's Conflicts	21 - 33
	Jeremiah Prophesies Judgment on Judah	34 - 45
586 BC	The Fall of Jerusalem	52 See also 2 Kings 25
	Jeremiah Prophesies against Babylon	50-51

Making Sense of the Layout

The Call of Jeremiah	Ch. 1
Prophecies to Judah	Ch. 2-45
Prophecies to Gentiles	Ch. 46-51
Fall of Jerusalem	Ch. 52

OBSERVATION WORDS

Be on the lookout for the following words used throughout the book. Don't just mark them, but note what you learn about them.

- **God / Lord (any other names, references of God)**
- **Holy Spirit**
- **Messianic Prophecies (Jesus) and foreshadows/types of Jesus**
- **References to sin** (*what are they, what is the Lord accusing them of*)
- **Judgments** (*what is the Lord doing in response to sin*)
- **References to "In that day / in those days" or similar phrases**
Note: These may be referring to near future, far future, or both. Try to discern as you read what is being referenced.

- **My people / Judah / Jerusalem**
- **Return / repent**

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION AND CALL

- Describe Jeremiah's calling and hesitations. How does the Lord respond to Jeremiah's concerns? What does this teach you for your own life?
- There is a twofold nature to Jeremiah's calling (Jer. 1:10). What are the two parts and why are they important?
- Jeremiah has 2 visions with explanations. What are they and what do they mean?

CHAPTERS 2-38 – JUDAH'S SIN AND WARNING TO RETURN TO GOD

- What sins has Judah/Jerusalem (and Israel) done against the Lord?
- What descriptions does God use for His people? (i.e. restless camel, wild donkey, etc.)
- What instructions/warnings are given to the people?

- What is the nature of judgment that is coming?

- Chapter 7 is full of lessons for us! What are 2 lessons that stick out to you and why?

- What do you learn about covenant? What is the heart of God regarding covenant?

- What symbolic acts Jeremiah is told to do? List each and the lesson the act is to teach.

- What persecutions did Jeremiah endure as part of his calling? How did Jeremiah react? How did the Lord respond? What can you learn from this for your own life?

- What Messianic prophecies did you see in this section (ch. 2-38)?

- Review chapter 29 again. What encouragement does the Lord give the exiles? What would you find encouraging? Discouraging? How does this chapter apply to your life today?

- What was most distressing to you in this section (ch. 2-38)?

- What was most encouraging in this section?

- How did you see the Holy Spirit represented?

CHAPTERS 39-45 – FALL OF JERUSALEM AND JUDAH UPROOTED

- What is your reaction to the fall of Jerusalem and God's chosen form of judgment?

- Why do you think the Lord is against the surviving remnant of Jerusalem going to Egypt?

- Review chapter 45, the message to Baruch. What is happening here and what is the lesson we are to learn from it?

CHAPTERS 46-51 – PROPHECIES TO THE NATIONS

- Name the different nations receiving prophetic words and what sins are leading to their judgment.
- Some nations receive words of restoration. Which nations are they?
- What do you learn about the character and nature of God based on these prophecies to other nations?
- What comfort did Israel & Judah receive from these prophetic words?

CHAPTERS 52 – REVIEW & POSTSCRIPT

- What ultimately is the message behind the fall of Jerusalem? What did it speak to God's people? What did it speak to surrounding nations?
- Throughout the book of Jeremiah, King Zedekiah was told by the Lord what action he needed to take regarding the Babylonians. What do you need to learn from Zedekiah's life?

- What hope remains for Jerusalem amidst its destruction, demolished worship, and depopulation?

OVERALL SUMMARY

- What is the biggest lesson you learned from this book? How will you apply that lesson in your own life?
- What differences do you notice between Isaiah and Jeremiah in their prophecies to Israel and Judah?
- When you look at our world today, what similarities and differences do you see between our world and Judah? What is your response to this?
- How do you respond to the fact that everyone suffered amidst judgment – even Jeremiah who faithfully followed the Lord? Is that fair of God?
- Other than Messianic prophecies, how else did you see Jesus in this book? What did you learn about Him through this?

- How did you see the Holy Spirit in this book? What did you learn about Him?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER: