

PART 3 THE MAJOR PROPHETS

JEREMIAH

INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah belonged to a priestly family from Anathoth, just to the NE of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. As a young man, Jeremiah was chosen to declare *The Voice of the Lord* (red italics). Like Moses, he was reluctant and made excuses but was told not to be afraid because God would both enable and deliver him. Jeremiah is called the Weeping Prophet because he laments, in great anguish of spirit, the future destruction of Zion. The Book of Jeremiah contains more words than any other book in the Bible. He expresses *The Voice of the Lord*, not only to Israel but also to the Gentile nations, in great detail and often in poetic form.

Before studying the Prophets it is advisable first to read the Preface in Part 1. The section on each prophet is a complete Bible study on its own. Only a brief outline of *The Voice of the Lord* can be conveyed.

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

Read Jeremiah Chapter1

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you and appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah 1: 5

Jeremiah was set apart and consecrated to speak God's word, the hand of the Lord having touched his mouth.

Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

See, I have this day appointed you to the oversight of the nations and of the kingdoms to root out and pull down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.

Jeremiah 1: 9b, 10

The Call of Jeremiah included two visions:

The first - *an almond branch*, a tree which blooms early in the year, meaning the Lord would be watchful and prompt to carry out His word. Secondly, Jeremiah saw a pot with its boiling contents tipped ready to be poured out in judgement on Judea and the city of Jerusalem for their sins of idolatry and wickedness. God promised Jeremiah strength like a fortified city, an iron pillar and bronze walls against the kings, princes, priests and people of the land.

They shall fight against you, but they shall not finally prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.

Jeremiah 1:19

Read Jeremiah 2: 1 - 23, 31 - 37

The people had forgotten the Lord's mighty deliverance from slavery in Egypt and entry into the Promised land. God spoke many times to Jeremiah and like the other true prophets, *The Voice of the Lord* conveyed the same message – severe judgement for their idolatry in forsaking the Lord, shedding the blood of the poor and making alliance with Egypt and Assyria. Even the priests, the rulers and the false prophets sinned against the Lord in worshipping idols.

Has a nation ever changed its gods, even though they are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory (God) for that which does not profit.

Have you not brought this upon yourselves by forsaking the Lord your God when He led you in the way?
Jeremiah 2: 17

Behold, I will bring you to judgement because you say, I have not sinned. □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Jeremiah 2: 35



KINGS OF JUDAH

Read Jeremiah 3: 6 - 18,

Jeremiah began his long prophetic ministry in 626 B.C. during the reign of good King Josiah and continued after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. As the Lord's spokesman, Jeremiah prophesied through the reigns of Josiah's sons – Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, grandson Jehoiachin and finally Zedekiah, the king's uncle when Jehoiachin was exiled to Babylon. Jeremiah was King Josiah's friend and counsellor for Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. After Josiah was killed at Megiddo, the succeeding Judean kings, the officials, priests, false prophets and people were against Jeremiah as they had been against King Josiah's reforms. Jeremiah was often imprisoned, being considered a traitor for his outspoken message, predicting the Babylonian invasion, saying their pagan gods would not help them and their allies would disappoint. Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people would go into exile because they refused to repent having no reverence and awe of the Lord. Judah had failed to learn the bitter lesson that Israel had not listened to *The Voice of the Lord* and was already in exile in 721 BC.

The Lord said to me:(Jeremiah) Backsliding and faithless Israel has shown herself less guilty than false and treacherous Judah.

Jeremiah 3: 11

Like the other prophets, Jeremiah's message included the promise of hope and eventual return of the exiles to Zion. *The Voice of the Lord* promised good to Israel in future days when the holy Ark of the Covenant would not even be remembered or another one made! In those days Judah will be one with Israel and Jerusalem will be the *Throne of the Lord* to which all nations will come. In those days there will be words of true repentance.

BABYLONIAN INVASION

Read Jeremiah 4: 15 - 17

In anguish of heart, Jeremiah declared the coming disaster from the north he foresaw - the Babylonian invasion. The faithless people of Judah and Jerusalem had brought the punishment of ruin on themselves for there was no repentance and return to the Lord.

They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Jeremiah 4: 22b

Read Jeremiah 5: 11 - 18, 25 - 31

The people did not believe Jeremiah's prophetic word of ruin by sword, famine and plague; while the false prophets spoke lies and the priesthood ruled by their own authority.

And My people love to have it so! But what will they do when the end comes?

Jeremiah 5: 31b

JERUSALEM'S SIEGE PREDICTED

Read Jeremiah 6: 6 - 8

Jeremiah again prophesied that Judah and Jerusalem would be attacked from the North and the land become desolate.

Their houses will be turned over to others, their fields and their wives together; for I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord.

Jeremiah 6: 12

The houses of Israel and Judah had failed to listen to *The Voice of the Lord* and had rejected His law and so God had rejected them.

To describe the grim conditions of the coming siege and conquest, Jeremiah often used the phrase:

Terror on every side.

Jeremiah 6: 25b

JEREMIAH'S TEMPLE MESSAGES

In giving his Temple Messages (Chapters 7 - 10) Jeremiah was told to stand at the gate of the Temple and declare God's words to the people coming to worship. The messages were probably given at intervals during his long ministry, starting in the days of good King Josiah.

Jeremiah prophesied that the house of the Lord (Solomon's Temple) would be destroyed as the sanctuary at Shiloh had been and Judah would be cast out of God's presence like Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom). If they stopped sinning, worshipping other gods, oppressing the alien, the fatherless and the widow, they would continue to live in the land.

If they repented of their wickedness in breaking the Ten Commandments (sins of idolatry, adultery, stealing, murder and even shedding innocent blood in the sacrifice of their sons and daughters in the fire) their punishment would be revoked. *The Voice of the Lord* had spoken but the people had not listened. Jeremiah was told several times not to pray for them, the concern of his heart!

Do not pray for this people or make intercession to Me, for I will not listen to or hear you.

Jeremiah 7: 16, 11: 14

Speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to and obey you; also call to them, but they will not answer you.

Jeremiah 7: 27

THE WEEPING PROPHET

Jeremiah continued his Temple messages by recounting the sins of the people followed by dire punishment for their shameless wickedness. Unlike Jeremiah, the priests and prophets spoke falsely deceiving the people saying:

Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Jeremiah 8: 11b, (6: 14b)



Jeremiah instead prophesied dearth, death and destruction. He wept in an agony of mind and mourned in reproach of his people asking: *Is there no balm in Gilead?* Jeremiah 8: 22a (9: 1, 2)

Jeremiah proclaimed there was no truth in the land but slander and deceit, even between brethren and friends. *They do not know and acknowledge Me, says the Lord* Jeremiah 9: 3b, 6b

The ruin of the land and forthcoming scattering of the people into exile would fulfil the Covenant curses for disobedience listed by Moses.

(Deuteronomy Chapter 27: 14 - 26)

Because they have forsaken My law, which I set before them, and have not listened to or obeyed My voice. Jeremiah 9: 13

There would be wailing and lamenting with tears for their failure to keep God's word:

Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise boast in his wisdom; let not the mighty boast in his strength, let not the rich boast in his riches;

But let him who glories glory in this; that he knows Me, that I am the Lord, Who practises loving-kindness, judgement and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight.

Jeremiah 9: 23, 24

PUNISHMENT OF THE SURROUNDING GENTILE NATIONS

The punishment of Judah would extend also to surrounding lands - Egypt, Edom, Ammon, Moab and to all those uncircumcised in heart. These nations worshiped worthless idols, that could neither hear nor speak, unlike the true God, Who created the heavens and the earth.

Since these same nations had devised evil against the house of Israel, Jeremiah, in lamenting the plight of his people, prayed for an outcome of God's justice.

(Jeremiah 10: 23 - 25)

THE BROKEN COVENANT



Read Jeremiah 11: 6 - 14

Jeremiah was commanded to proclaim God's word in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. The Curses for Disobedience would now fall on Zion for the people, like their forefathers, had broken the Sinai Covenant in worshipping many gods. Again, Jeremiah was told not to pray for them because the Lord would not listen to their cries of distress.

PLOT AT ANANOTH

Read Jeremiah 11: 18 - 23

Jeremiah's disbelieved predictions of drought, famine, sword and plague caused him to become an enemy and a traitor in the eyes of the people and he was often threatened with death. It was the Lord Who revealed the plot to kill Jeremiah by the men of his own home town at Ananoth – even members of his own family (Jeremiah 12: 6). Such experiences caused Jeremiah to make the first of his six confessions or complaints to the Lord.

Read Jeremiah 12: 1 - 4

Jeremiah's 2nd complaint in prayer included one of man's often repeated questions.

Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

Jeremiah 12: 1

From the Lord's answer and rebuke, Jeremiah understood that his difficulties as a prophet would not diminish. Ultimately the unrighteous in the land would reap what they sowed, including those surrounding enemy nations. In days to come all these people would return with only the disobedient finally destroyed.

JEREMIAH'S LINEN BELT



Read Jeremiah 13: 1 - 11

Through Jeremiah the Lord gave warnings of the forthcoming disaster by several prophetic instructions. He was told to buy and wear a linen belt and later hide it in a rocky crevice by the Euphrates. This belt was symbolic of the linen garments worn by the priesthood, a sign of righteousness and the houses of Israel and Judah bound to the Lord like a waistband. When Jeremiah was told to retrieve the girdle, it was ruined!

WINESKINS OF WRATH

Read Jeremiah 13: 12 - 14

Wineskins full of wine, symbol of drunkenness gave a second prophetic warning of God's wrath against the Davidic kings, the priests, false prophets and all those living in Jerusalem. As a sign of the coming destruction, the Lord would smash them together; meaning one against another, fathers against sons, without pity or compassion. Jeremiah continued to weep bitter tears for the coming captivity of his people.

(Jeremiah 13: 17)

This is your lot, the portion measured to you from Me, because you have forgotten Me and trusted in false gods and alliances with idolatrous nations.

Jeremiah 13: 25

Read Jeremiah 14: 1 - 6

DROUGHT IN THE LAND

There was severe drought in Judah even though the false prophets had declared there would be no sword or famine (Jeremiah 5: 12). Although God had not sent them, they continued to lie in the name of the Lord promising no harm would come but a time of lasting peace. Jeremiah, God's true prophet, acknowledged that only *the Hope of Israel, her Saviour in time of trouble*, could send rain to end the drought. The Lord commanded Jeremiah:

Do not pray for this people for their good.

Jeremiah 14: 11

Jeremiah prayed that the Lord in honour of His name would not forsake His covenant people.



GOD'S ANSWER

Read Chapter 15: 1 - 9

God answered Jeremiah's prayer with these words:

Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be turned with favour toward this people.
Jeremiah 15: 1a

*Such as are destined for death, to death;
and such as are for the sword, to the sword;
and such as are for famine, to famine;
and such as are for captivity, to captivity.*

Jeremiah 15: 2b

Jeremiah's messages, unlike the false prophets, predicted inevitable punishment because of the sins of King Manasseh, who shed so much innocent blood in Jerusalem (v 4).

Read Jeremiah 15: 10 - 21

Like Job in his suffering, Jeremiah in his 3rd complaint despaired he had ever been born.

*Shall he who would find fault with the Almighty contend with Him?
He who disputes with God, let him answer it.*

Job 40: 1

Jeremiah was rebuked for doubting God's faithfulness and needed to repent to continue as His prophet. Jeremiah had few friends because of the content of his unpopular message. God reassured Jeremiah of protection, for he would be as a bronze wall to the people.

I will deliver you out of the hands of the wicked.

Jeremiah 15: 21a

Read Jeremiah Chapter 16

God told Jeremiah never to marry and raise children because of the coming disaster of death and destruction. He was not to enter the homes of bereavement or celebration.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah's prophecies also gave God's word of hope in Israel's future restoration.

When it shall no more be said, As the Lord lives, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, But, As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries to which he had driven them. And I will bring them again to their land which I gave to their fathers.

Jeremiah 16: 14, 15

Therefore says the Lord – I will make them know My power and My might; and they will know that My name is the Lord.

Jeremiah 16: 21

Read Jeremiah 17: 1 - 10

Israel's sins were permanently engraved on the heart as if by an iron pen with a flint point.

Through Jeremiah, *The Voice of the Lord* told the people their sin was the reason for the loss of their inheritance (17: 4a).

Cursed is the man who trusts in man, making weak (human) flesh his arm, and whose mind and heart turn aside from the Lord.

Jeremiah 17: 5

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope and confidence the Lord is.

Jeremiah 17: 7, (Psalm 1)

Following Jeremiah's words, the Lord gave an immediate answer to the prophet's observation and question concerning man's deceitful heart:

Who can know it?

Jeremiah 17: 9

I the Lord search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

Jeremiah 17: 10

Read Jeremiah 17: 12 - 18

Jeremiah in his 4th complaint revealed his anguish of spirit as the spokesman of the Lord's judgement. He even sought redress against his enemies who denounced him as a false prophet.

THE SABBATH

Read Jeremiah 17: 19 - 27

Once again, Jeremiah was commanded to stand in the gates of Jerusalem.

He was to warn king and people to keep the Sabbath holy, to obey its requirements and then the city would not be destroyed.

THE POTTER'S HOUSE



Read Jeremiah 18: 1 - 17

Jeremiah was told to go down to the Potter's house. There he saw the potter making a vessel that was ruined - like the *linen belt*. Jeremiah watched while the potter started to make another.

Then the word of the Lord came to me:

O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.

Jeremiah 18: 5, 6

Read Jeremiah 18: 18 - 23

Following the Lord's message of disastrous times to come, the enemies of Jeremiah plotted to kill him. Jeremiah prayed, in his 5th prayer of complaint, to be vindicated, whereas in earlier days he had prayed for Judah's deliverance.

Read Jeremiah Chapter 19

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to buy a jar from a potter.

He was to pronounce the coming disaster before a group of priests and elders near the Potsherd Gate in the Valley of Ben Hinnom on the western side of Jerusalem.

Such symbolic acts were needed because the people had failed to listen and had committed gross evil in the sight of the Lord.

As they watched, Jeremiah broke the jar and declared, *The Voice of the Lord:*

I will break this people and this city as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it cannot be mended.

I will even make this city like Topheth.

Jeremiah 19: 11a, 12b

Topheth was the site, in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, used for child sacrifice; and desecrated earlier by good King Josiah.

(2 Kings 23: 10a)

JEREMIAH AND PASHHUR

Read Jeremiah 20: 1 - 6

Pashhur, one of the priests, on hearing Jeremiah's message, had him beaten and put in the stocks. After his release the next day, Jeremiah gave the following prophetic word:

You, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house shall go into captivity; you shall go to Babylon and there you shall die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied falsely.

Jeremiah 20: 6

JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

Read Jeremiah 20: 7 - 18

This is the last, most bitter and longest of Jeremiah's six confessions or complaints to the Lord for proclaiming God's message of doom and destruction. Jeremiah, being so mocked by his enemies, once again cursed the day he was born.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah knew the Lord was with him and that he could not refrain from speaking out *The Voice of the Lord* for God's words were as if –

a burning fire shut up in my bones.

Jeremiah 20: 9

JERUSALEM UNDER SIEGE

Read Jeremiah Chapter 21

In the remaining years of Jeremiah's ministry, Jerusalem was under siege by the army of King Nebuchadnezzar. King Zedekiah (Judah's last king) sent messengers to Jeremiah hoping against hope for the Lord's deliverance.

Jeremiah gave the Lord's message - an ultimatum of life or death.

He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, famine or pestilence.

But he who goes out and passes over to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live.

Jeremiah 21: 9

ACCOUNT OF PROPHECIES GIVEN AGAINST JUDAH'S EVIL KINGS

Through Jeremiah, the sons and grandson of King Josiah (the last Judean king to do right in the eyes of the Lord) were condemned for their evil practices.

They had not listened and obeyed *The Voice of the Lord*.

KING JEHOAHAZ - 608 B.C.

Read Jeremiah 22: 1 - 12

King Josiah's son – King Jehoahaz (Shallum) was taken captive by Pharaoh Neco after ruling for only 3 months and died in Egypt.

KING JEHOIAKIM - 609 - 598

Read Jeremiah 22: 13 - 19

Josiah's son – King Jehoiakim – (Eliakim) noted for his cruelty, ruled when Judea was invaded by King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah's prophetic word was fulfilled.

He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey –

dragged out and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 22: 19

KING JEHOIACHIN - 598

Read Jeremiah 22: 24 - 30

Jehoiakim's son, King Jehoiachin (Jeconiah – Coniah) surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was taken to Babylon. He was eventually released from prison and died in Babylon.

He also only ruled for 3 months in Jerusalem and was the last surviving Davidic king - till Christ. Jeremiah prophesied that none of Jehoiachin's children would rule in the line of David (v. 30) on the throne in Jerusalem.

The Voice of the Lord addressed these words to Jerusalem –

I spoke to you in your times of prosperity, but you said, I will not listen!

This has been your attitude from your youth; you have not obeyed My voice. Jeremiah 22: 21

KING ZEDEKIAH – 597 - 586

Zedekiah, youngest son of Josiah and uncle of King Jehoiachin, was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to rule in Jerusalem. King Zedekiah ruled for 11 years until Jerusalem was captured in 586 B.C. He was imprisoned in Babylon and died there.

The Voice of the Lord condemned all these kings for their uncaring and often cruel rule of His people; together with the false prophets and ungodly priests. They failed to listen to God's warnings given by Jeremiah and consequently suffered for their wickedness.



THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

Read Jeremiah 23: 1– 8

In future days on return from exile, the Lord would give His people caring shepherds (leaders).

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, and He will reign as King and do wisely and will execute justice and righteousness. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name by which He shall be called: The Lord Our Righteousness. Therefore behold, the days are coming, when they shall no more say, As the Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, But, As the Lord lives Who

brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries to which I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land. Jeremiah 23: 5 - 8

Read Jeremiah 23: 9 - 40

LYING WORDS OF THE PROPHETS

Unlike Jeremiah, the false prophets spoke lying words of their own visions, for they had not stood in the Council of the Lord. Jeremiah was heart-broken at the ungodliness of the priests and the prophets who led the people astray in wickedness and away from the Lord -

They have all of them become to Me like Sodom and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

JEREMIAH'S VISION OF TWO BASKET OF FIGS

Jeremiah 23: 14b

Read Jeremiah Chapter 24

After Nebuchadnezzar had taken King Jehoiachin into exile together with officials, craftsmen and people, Jeremiah saw a vision of two baskets of figs - one of very good figs and the other very bad. The good figs indicated good to the exiles in Babylon, for the Lord would care for them and they would return home to the land of Israel and return to the Lord with their whole heart.

I will set My eyes upon them for good and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not pull them down and I will plant and not pluck them up.

Jeremiah 24: 6

The bad figs referred to Zedekiah and the people who had not surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar. Whether they remained in Judea or fled to Egypt for safety, they would be destroyed by sword, famine or plague.

SEVENTY YEARS' EXILE

Read Jeremiah 25: 1 - 14

During the reign of King Jehoiakim, this word from the Lord came to Jeremiah in the 23rd year of his ministry as God's prophet. Like other true prophets, Jeremiah had spoken again and again but the people had not listened.

It was the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign (605 B.C.) when the Lord decreed:

These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then when seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, says the Lord, for their iniquity, and will make the land a perpetual waste.

THE CUP OF THE LORD'S WRATH

Jeremiah 25: 11b, 12

Read Jeremiah 25: 15 - 38

Jeremiah took from the hand of the Lord the cup filled with the wine of His wrath. As divine punishment, Jeremiah was to give this cup (symbol of a sword) to the nations to drink, starting with Jerusalem and ending with Sheshach (Babylon). God was using King Nebuchadnezzar as His instrument of wrath but ultimately Babylon would also be destroyed.

Hear *The Voice of the Lord*:

Prophecy against them all these words and say to them: the Lord shall roar from on high and utter His voice from His holy habitation.

Jeremiah 25: 30a

MORE TEMPLE MESSAGES

Read Jeremiah Chapter 26

Jeremiah's Temple messages prophesying against Jerusalem continued in the reign of Jehoiakim. *Amend your ways and obey the voice of the Lord your God; then the Lord will reverse the decision concerning the evil which He has pronounced against you.* Jeremiah 26: 13

Jeremiah was soon threatened with death but unlike the prophet Uriah, Jeremiah was spared through the intervention of the elders and his friend Ahikam.

Read Jeremiah 27: 1 - 11

JEREMIAH'S YOKE

As the reign of king Zedekiah began, Jeremiah was commanded to make a yoke. He was to wear it as a symbolic message to King Zedekiah and the kings of the surrounding nations already invaded (Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon) - with the following ultimatum:

- Bow the neck under Nebuchadnezzar's yoke and remain in your own lands.
- Fail to serve Nebuchadnezzar and be destroyed by sword, famine and plague.

Do not believe the false prophets who say: You shall not serve the King of Babylon. Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought back from Babylon; for they are prophesying a lie to you. Jeremiah 27: 14b
Jeremiah 27: 16b

Many sacred golden items from the Jerusalem temple had already been carried away to Babylon. Jeremiah warned Zedekiah, that if he failed to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the remaining articles would also be removed.

FALSE PROPHETS

Read Jeremiah 28: 1 - 17 Hananiah, a false prophet, contradicted Jeremiah and broke his yoke. He prophesied that God would break Nebuchadnezzar's yoke and the king, exiled people and the Temple vessels would return within two years. Jeremiah, in the presence of the priests and all the people, replied with these words from the Lord: *As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when that prophet's word comes to pass, only then will it be known that the Lord has truly sent him*

Jeremiah 28:9

Later, the Lord spoke these words to Jeremiah: *Go, tell Hananiah, Thus says the Lord:*

You have broken yoke bars of wood, but you have made in their stead bars of iron.

This year you will die, because you have taught rebellion against the Lord. Jeremiah 28: 13, 16b

This prophecy was fulfilled on the death of Hananiah that same year.

LONG LETTER TO THE EXILES

Read Jeremiah 29: 1 - 14 Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiles already in Babylon recording the word of the Lord of hosts. The text of this letter summarised the symbolic images of *the good and bad figs*. The exiles were not to listen to the false prophets but to seek the peace and prosperity of the cities where they would dwell in captivity for 70 years.

The Lord had plans to give them hope for a prosperous future on their return home.

For I know the thoughts that I have for you, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

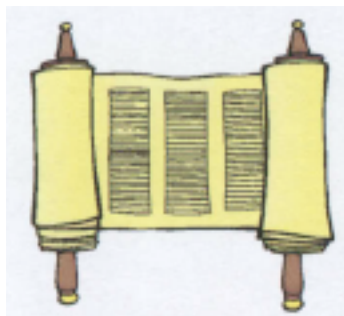
Then you will call upon Me and you will come and pray to Me and I will hear you.

Then you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29: 11, 12, 13

The people who remained behind in Jerusalem would be destroyed according to the word of the Lord as in Jeremiah's vision of the bad figs. In the same letter, Jeremiah prophesied against the two false prophets (Ahab and Zedekiah) who would be put to death by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah also prophesied against Shemaiah, another false prophet in Babylon, who had sent letters to Jerusalem - that the madman, Jeremiah, should be put in the stocks. (Jeremiah 29: 20-23)

GOD'S PROMISES OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION



Read Chapters 30, 31

Jeremiah was commanded to write all the words spoken by the Lord in a book (scroll). This record is in beautifully written poetry and contains many well-known verses giving promises of hope and future prosperity after the grievous time of *Jacob's trouble*. God's prophetic words of both destruction and restoration refer to times in the near and distant future when the Messianic Age will dawn.

They will serve the Lord their God and David's (descendant) their King, Whom I will raise up for them.

Jeremiah 30: 9

Their prince will be one of them and their ruler will come from the midst of them. Jeremiah 30: 21a

The Voice of the Lord continued to declare many gracious promises to His people – too many to include in this Study. The scattered Remnant will be gathered from the ends of the earth and ultimately return to Israel - a greater event than the Exodus from Egypt. God's everlasting faithfulness and love for Israel will cause the people to weep tears of repentance and once again songs of joyful praise will be heard in Zion. *For I am a father to Israel and Ephraim (Israel) is My firstborn.* Jeremiah 31:9b

Rachel would no longer weep for her children who were no more.

(Jeremiah 31: 15)

To Jeremiah, remembered as the weeping prophet, all these revelations came in a dream; so sweet and reassuring on awaking.

(Jeremiah 31: 26)

THE NEW COVENANT

The climax of all Jeremiah's prophecies was God's gracious promise of a New Covenant – an everlasting covenant unlike the Old Covenant inscribed on stone.

This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. I will put My law within them and on their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God and they will be My people.

Jeremiah 31: 33

The first covenant required the blood of animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, the New Covenant - the blood of Christ.

For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah 31: 34b

The Creator God's sure promises to the people of Israel, as a nation before Him, are likened to the fixed ordinances of the sun, moon and stars.

(31: 35 – 37, 33: 20, 21, 25, 26)

THE FIELD AT ANATHOTH

Read Jeremiah 32: 1 - 16

During the siege of Jerusalem and while he was imprisoned in the Palace courtyard, Jeremiah, at the word of the Lord, bought the field at Anathoth from his uncle. Both the deed of purchase and the unsealed copy when signed and witnessed were placed by Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, in a clay jar to be kept in safe-keeping for a long time to await God's promise of future restoration.

After 70 years of Jewish captivity, Cyrus destroyed Babylon in 539 B.C. and decreed the exiles were free to return to the land of Israel and rebuild Jerusalem.



EVERLASTING COVENANT OF BLESSING

The Lord answered Jeremiah's prayer (32: 17 - 25) concerning his purchase of the field about to fall into enemy hands, with these words:

Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?
Jeremiah 32: 27

Read Jeremiah 32: 36 - 44

Although the Lord had spoken words of desolation and disaster, He gave Jeremiah many promises of Israel's glorious future hope and restoration, an everlasting Covenant of Blessing.

- *They will be My people and I will be their God.*
- *I will make an everlasting covenant with them.*
- *Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land.*
- *Fields shall be bought in this land.* Jeremiah 32: 38, 40a, 41a, 43

ISRAEL'S FUTURE RESTORATION

Read Jeremiah Chapter 33:

Jeremiah was still a prisoner in the Palace courtyard when *The Voice of the Lord* came to him the second time with many words of forgiveness, peace and prosperity:

Call to Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

This reference is sometimes called God's telephone number! 333 Jeremiah 33: 3

I will cleanse them from all the guilt and iniquity by which they have sinned against me and I will forgive all their guilt and iniquities by which they have sinned and rebelled against Me. Jeremiah 33: 8

Once again the sounds of gladness and joy would be heard in Israel, the voices of the bridegroom and bride and the singing of those bringing thank offerings to the house of the Lord.

For I will cause the captivity of the land to be reversed and return to be as it was at first.

Jeremiah 33: 11b

In those days and at that time will I cause a righteous Branch (the Messiah) to grow up to David; and He shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. Jeremiah 33: 15

As the stars of the heavens cannot be numbered nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the offspring of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me. Jeremiah 33: 22

If My covenant with day and night does not stand and if I have not appointed the ordinances of the heavens and the earth, then will I also cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant and will not choose one of his offspring to be ruler over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jeremiah 33: 25, 26a

JEWISH SLAVES RELEASED

Read Jeremiah Chapter 34

As Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonian army, Jeremiah confirmed the words of the Lord to King Zedekiah, that although Jerusalem would be captured by Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah would die in peace. Later the message changed to Zedekiah's inevitable captivity because the inhabitants of Jerusalem, having freed by covenant all Jewish slaves, according to the 7th year of release in the Law of Moses, broke it and enslaved them again.

(Deuteronomy 15: 12 - 15)

The covenant had been broken and the Lord's name therefore profaned during the brief lifting of the siege; a reprieve caused by Pharaoh's threatened attack.

(Jeremiah 37: 5 - 10)



THE OBEDIENT RECHABITES

Read Jeremiah Chapter 35

Unlike the nomadic Rechabites, who obeyed their forefather and never drank wine, the people of Judah and Jerusalem had failed to listen to *The Voice of the Lord* by the mouth of the prophets.

To this day they drink no wine, but have obeyed their father's command.

But I, even I, have persistently spoken to you, but you have not listened to and obeyed Me.

JEREMIAH'S SCROLL

Jeremiah 35: 14b

Read Jeremiah Chapter 36



In the reign of Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah, Jeremiah was told to write on a scroll God's message against Israel, Judah and the nations. Jeremiah dictated the words of the Lord to Baruch, his scribe or secretary. Since Jeremiah was in hiding, Baruch read the scroll first to the people in the house of the Lord and then to the princes. Finally, it was read to King Jehoiakim, who cut and burned it, column by column, in the fire in his winter quarters! At the command of the King, Jeremiah and his scribe were to be arrested but the Lord had hidden them. At the command of the Lord, Jeremiah dictated another scroll. God's dire prophetic word of disaster against Jehoiakim and the inhabitants of Jerusalem would soon be fulfilled. God had a special word for Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe and loyal friend.

Should you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not!

Jeremiah 45: 5a

Baruch's brother held high office (Jeremiah 51: 59) in King Zedekiah's government, so this may be the reason for the Lord's word through Jeremiah to Baruch; together with God's promise of safety.

JEREMIAH'S IMPRISONMENT

Read Jeremiah 37: 11 – 21

On the temporary withdrawal of the Babylonian army, Jeremiah was arrested and imprisoned for supposedly deserting to the enemy as he left Jerusalem for his home in Anathoth. God's prophet was even beaten and held in a dungeon for many days until Zedekiah, in seeking a word from the Lord, ordered Jeremiah to be kept in the courtyard of the guard instead.

Jeremiah gave God's same message to Zedekiah.

You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 37: 17b

Read Jeremiah 38: 6 - 13

Jeremiah was hated especially by the princes and officials. They wanted to kill him because of his seemingly traitorous message and so Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern pit. He was rescued from certain death by Ebed-Melech, a Cushite eunuch, who spoke to the king and with the aid of rags and ropes had Jeremiah lifted to safety.

Read Jeremiah 38: 14 - 28

King Zedekiah, who did evil in the eyes of the Lord, was untrustworthy and fearful of both the Babylonian enemy and the Jews who had gone over to them. Again and in secret, Jeremiah gave God's same word to the king with a dire alternative for disobedience.

Obey, I beg of you, the voice of the Lord, Who speaks to you through me.

Then it will be well with you and you will live.

Jeremiah 38: 20

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Read Jeremiah 39: 1 - 10, 52: 1 - 23

In the ninth year of king Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar's army marched to attack Jerusalem. The siege of the city causing famine lasted for over 2 years before the Babylonian army broke through its defences. Zedekiah and his officers escaped at night but were soon captured, taken to King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah and sentenced. Zedekiah saw his sons killed before his eyes. He was then blinded, taken to Babylon in bronze shackles and died there in prison.

The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were burned with fire and the city walls broken down. The Temple's massive bronzes, its pillars and precious gold and silver vessels were carried to Babylon and many of the people taken into exile. Only the poorest were left in the land of Judah.

GOD'S WORD TO EBED-MELECH

Read Jeremiah 39: 15 - 18

Before Jeremiah's release while still in the courtyard of the guard, *The Voice of the Lord* gave this message about Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian (Cushite) eunuch who had saved the prophet's life.

I will surely deliver you; and you will not fall by the sword, but your life will be as a reward of battle to you, because you have put your trust in Me.

Jeremiah 39: 18

JEREMIAH'S RELEASE

Read Jeremiah 40: 1 - 6

Nebuchadnezzar gave orders for Jeremiah's release. He had been found in chains by the commander of the imperial guard along with the Jewish captives going into exile in Babylon. On release, Jeremiah was handed over to Gedaliah, appointed Governor of Judah and stayed with him at Mizpah. Gedaliah was the son of Jeremiah's friend Ahikam. Even the chief officer of the Babylonian army knew that the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of her people were caused by disobedience to the God of Israel.

(Jeremiah 40: 2, 3)

Read Jeremiah Chapter 42

After Gedaliah's assassination, the surviving officers and the people with them wanted to go to Egypt for safety. They came to Jeremiah to ask him to pray for a word from the Lord.

Ten days later God gave His message, followed by the alternative consequences.

If you will remain in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pull you up; for I will relent and comfort and ease Myself concerning the evil that in chastisement I have done to you and I will substitute mercy and loving-kindness for judgement.

Jeremiah 42: 10

Know for a certainty that you shall die by the sword, by famine and by pestilence in the place (Egypt) where you desire to go to dwell temporarily.

Jeremiah 42: 22

ESCAPE TO EGYPT

Read Jeremiah 43: 1 - 13

Once again, *The Voice of the Lord* through Jeremiah was disbelieved. The remnant from Judah blamed Baruch and in disobedience set out for Egypt. Attended by his loyal scribe, Jeremiah went with his own people; all those previously left in the charge of Gedaliah – army officers, men, women and children, including king's daughters.

Knowing the outcome, Jeremiah must have been an unwilling traveller.

On arrival in Lower Egypt, the word of the Lord commanded Jeremiah to bury large stones in the pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace - where Nebuchadnezzar would set up his throne!

Read Jeremiah 44: 24 - 30

The people of Judah, now refugees in Egypt, burned incense to idols, worshipped other gods as they had done in Jerusalem; and so were destroyed as the word of the Lord had spoken.

The prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar did in Egypt as he had done to Jerusalem.

Only a small number of fugitives would ever return to the land of Judah and there they –

shall know whose word shall stand, Mine or theirs.

Jeremiah 44: 28b

THE VOICE OF THE LORD TO THE NATIONS

Jeremiah 46: 24 - 28

EGYPT



God's word against the nations through Jeremiah began with Egypt, the first power to dominate the region militarily during the time of the prophet's ministry. The Egyptian army had already been heavily defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, in the first year of his reign at the battle of Carchemish on the R. Euphrates in 605 B.C. Jeremiah's prophecy that Egyptian power would be destroyed and the land made desolate was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt in 568 – 567BC. The Lord also gave the promise that Egypt in future times would again be inhabited and also reassuring words of safety to Israel following the punishment for her guilt.

Fear not, O Jacob My servant, says the Lord, for I am with you. For I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you; but I will not make a full end of you. But I will correct you in just measure; and I will not hold you guiltless or leave you unpunished. Jeremiah 46: 28, (30:11)□

PHILISTIA

Jeremiah Chapter 47

Likewise, Jeremiah's prophecy against the Philistine cities, including the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon to the north, was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar attacked in 604 B.C.

Jeremiah Chapter 48

MOAB

Jeremiah's message of God's wrath against Moab is lengthy. The prophecy that the pride of Moab would be punished was later fulfilled in 582 BC when Nebuchadnezzar invaded. Moab had often maltreated Israel and was divinely judged; but would be restored in Messianic days to come.

Moab shall be destroyed from being a nation, because he has magnified himself against the Lord.

Jeremiah 48: 42

Yet will I reverse the captivity and restore the fortunes of Moab in the latter days. Jeremiah 48: 47

AMMON

Jeremiah 49: 1 – 6

The word of the Lord revealed to Jeremiah that the Ammonites would also go into exile, the people of the god Ammon having taken over Israel's territory on the eastern side of Jordan belonging to the tribe of Gad. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Ammon in 582 in the 23rd year of his reign. Like Moab, the Lord declared He would restore the people of Ammon in later times.

Jeremiah 49: 7 - 22

EDOM



Jeremiah prophesied that Edom (Esau) would be destroyed forever like Sodom and Gomorrah for its pride and age-long enmity against their brethren – Israel.

The rocky heights of ancient Petra's ruins (v16) are situated in what was S. Edom.

DAMASCUS

Jeremiah 49: 23 - 27

Like Israel, Damascus, capital of Aram (Syria) had already been subjugated by Assyria.

Jeremiah 49: 28 - 33

KEDAR and HAZOR

These territories, as prophesied by Jeremiah, came under Babylonian control when the Babylonians attacked the lands to the east.

Jeremiah 49: 34 - 39

ELAM

Situated beyond the R. Tigris, Elam would also be scattered and go into exile; but would be restored in a future time. Jeremiah's prophecy concerning Elam was fulfilled early in the reign of King Zedekiah (597 – 586), the last king to rule in Jerusalem.

THE FALL OF BABYLON

Jeremiah chapters 50, 51

This oracle against Babylon and her idols is the longest and most detailed of all Jeremiah's prophecies against the Gentile nations. BABYLON, the destroyer of many countries would be conquered by Cyrus, the Persian. The Babylonians were defeated by a surprise attack on supposedly impenetrable Babylon when the waters of the R. Tigris were diverted. At the word of the Lord, Jeremiah predicted that Babylon would be captured and no one would live in it. Babylon had defied the Holy One of Israel and destroyed the Temple of the Lord. The Jews would be among the first of all the exiled people to flee Babylon as they returned to Zion; Israel and Judah weeping together would seek the Lord in tears. ***They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces in that direction, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.*** □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

Jeremiah 50: 5

This is the Everlasting Covenant of Messianic blessings to restored and redeemed Israel fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant. (Jeremiah 31: 33)

I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion.

Jeremiah 51: 24

O Lord, You have spoken concerning this place that it shall be cut off, so that nothing shall remain and dwell in it, neither man nor beast; but it shall be desolate forever.□□□

Jeremiah 51: 62

LAST WORDS OF JEREMIAH

The words of Jeremiah's last oracle predicting the fall of Babylon were written on a scroll to be delivered to Babylon and read there by Seraiah, Baruch's brother. Seraiah was a staff officer serving Zedekiah when the king was summoned to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

The scroll was then to be tied to a stone and thrown into the R. Euphrates; with these following words of *The Voice of the Lord*, as recorded:

Thus will Babylon sink and not rise because of the evil that I will bring upon her.

Jeremiah 51: 64

Jeremiah prophesied for forty years, warning God's people that their sin of idolatry in departing from the Lord would cause the destruction of Jerusalem. The description of the capture of the city, the destruction of its walls and the desecration of the Temple is described in Jeremiah Chapter 52 and was most probably written by Baruch.

LAMENTATIONS

In the Book of Lamentations, attributed to Jeremiah, the weeping prophet laments the Fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent bitter exile of his people as a judgement for sin.

Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, if the Lord has not commanded it?

Is it not out of the mouth of the Most High that good and evil proceed (adversity and prosperity)?

Why does a man sigh? And why does a man complain for the punishment of his sins?

Lamentations 3: 37 - 39

Although a book of mournful lament for the destruction of Jerusalem, written in great detail and skilful acrostic form, there are words of sincere repentance and the need for God's forgiveness. Despite the severity of His wrath, the Lord is a faithful, compassionate and loving God of Hope.

It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving kindness

that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3: 22, 23



TWO OTHER MAJOR PROPHETS

*EZEKIEL***** *DANIEL

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