

JEREMIAH: A Jet Tour Thru Jeremiah — “A Society That’s Drowning in Sin & God’s Man Proclaims Imminent Judgment & Sure Hope for All Who Repent & Turn to God!”

Introduction:

What if you lived in a society described by: apostasy, idolatry, perverted worship, moral decay, corrupt leadership, false prophets, soul-destroying gospels, immorality, selfishness, self-preservation.

Consider also Jeremiah 2.

It’s in this context, God raises up a young man, with a divine message, the weak man strengthened by Almighty God, to deliver His truth to sinners!

The **purpose** for the Book of Jeremiah was twofold:

(1) to show the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and Judah by Babylon -- because of their sin.

And yet, (2) in the midst of this judgment, God provided hope by revealing Judah’s future restoration and the destruction of Judah’s enemies.

I. The MAN Jeremiah

1. He lived a life of many conflicts b/c of God's message of coming judgment by the Babylonians.
2. He was threatened, tried for his life, put in jail, forced to flee from King Jehoiakim, publicly humiliated by a false prophet, thrown into pits, falsely accused, rejected for the ear-tickling messages of false prophets.
3. He was a man utterly living a life of CONFLICT

4 marks characterized the young man Jeremiah:

- (1) **Simplicity** — he was a simple youth who received the call from God; & he went (1:6-7).
- (2) **Sensitivity** — he was a sensitive man; he wept genuinely, heartfully, compassionately, sympathetically. He didn’t want to proclaim divine wrath; but he **felt** what he preached.
- (3) **Strength** — he stood like an iron tower in his willingness to stand alone against the popular opinions & societal ideologies of the day. He always delivered the whole message that God had given him to proclaim, and he never stopped speaking what God told him to say.
- (4) **Spirituality** — we peek into Jeremiah’s heart constantly as he pleads with God. He argues with God. He (almost) accuses God! He weeps & mourns to God! He loves His God. He is faithful to God. He casts himself utterly, entirely & desperately on the *unchanging character of this Sovereign GOD* in times of absolute despair.

JEREMIAH: A Jet Tour Thru Jeremiah — “A Society That’s Drowning in Sin & God’s Man Proclaims Imminent Judgment & Sure Hope for All Who Repent & Turn to God!”

Consider Jeremiah I

The context & introduction to JEREMIAH

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| context (1-3) | <i>setting</i> |
| call (4-8) | <i>setting apart</i> |
| commission (9-10) | <i>sending</i> |
| conversation (11-16) | <i>showing/securing</i> |
| confirmation (17-19) | <i>suffering</i> |

God called Jeremiah

>God strengthens Jeremiah

>Jeremiah suffers greatly

>God upholds His prophets

>God vindicates His Name

> God punishes all evildoers & saves the repentant!

II. The SETTING of Jeremiah

A. The historical, bigger picture

1. Jeremiah's his prophetic ministry was from 627BC - ca.580BC

- **Josiah**, Judah's last good king (640-609BC) instituted spiritual reforms when the book of the Law was discovered in 622BC.
- Jeremiah was on *GOOD TERMS* with Josiah and lamented when he was killed in 609BC by Pharaoh Neco.
- By this time, Babylon had already overthrown Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria (612BC). Babylon is now the world's superpower.
- SO, **Jehoahaz** replaced Josiah as king of Judah but reigned only 3 months before he was deposed and taken to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco.
- THEN, **Jehoiakim** (609-597BC) was Judah's next king.
 - He reigned as an Egyptian VASSAL KING (subject king) of Egypt till 605BC >> till Egypt was defeated by Babylon at Carchemish.
- Nebuchadnezzar then took Palestine in 605BC and deported the 1st wave of people to Babylon (like Daniel & 3 friends)
- THEN, **Jehoiachin** became king in 597BC and reigned for 3 months till he was replaced when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem & deported **Jehoiachin** to babylon (and many many people)
- THEN, **Zedekiah** was the last king of Judah and ruled for 11 years till Nebuchadnezzar came and totally overthrew Jerusalem in 586BC (exiled all the rest to Babylon/killed many/burned Temple).

**3 STAGES IN JEREMIAH'S MINISTRY:

1. From 627-605BC --- he prophesied while Judah was threatened by **Assyria** and Egypt
2. From 605-586BC --- he proclaimed God's judgment while Judah was threatened and besieged by **Babylon**
3. From 586-580BC ---- he ministered in Jerusalem and **Egypt** after Jerusalem was sacked

III. The OUTLINE of the Book of Jeremiah

- Introductory Notes -- 4 major characteristics
 1. lack of chronological arrangement
 2. autobiographical in nature
 3. different literary materials (poetry, prose discourse, narratives, wisdom lit, prophetic discourses, prayers)
 4. logical arrangement (e.g, 36.1-4)!

A short, memorable outline:

1. Call of Jeremiah (1)
2. Prophecies to Judah (2-45)
3. Prophecies to Nations (46-51)
4. Fall of Jerusalem (52)

A Fuller Outline of Jeremiah:

1. Preparation of Jeremiah (1)
2. Proclamation to Judah (2-45)
 - condemnation of Judah (2-29)
 - comfort to Judah = new covenant (30-33)
 - calamity on Judah (34-45)
3. Proclamations of judgment on the nations (46-51)
 - Egypt
 - Philistia
 - Moab
 - Ammon
 - Edom
 - Damascus
 - Kedar and Hazor
 - Elam
 - Babylon
4. Plummet/Destruction of Jerusalem (52)
 - destruction of Jerusalem (52.1-23)
 - deportation of Jews (24-30)
 - deliverance of Jehoiachin (31-34)

IV. The THEOLOGICAL THEMES of Jeremiah

A. Bibliology

1. God’s word like a fire - Jer 23.29
2. God’s Word is joy and delight (Jer 15.16)
3. God’s very word is spoken by the mouth of His messengers (Jer 23.28)

B. Theology proper (doctrine of God the Father)

1. God’s faithfulness, goodness, covenants, love, salvation (Jer 31)
2. The unshakeable, unrivaled, unstoppable, absolute sovereignty of God (Jer 33)

C. Anthropology (doctrine of man)

1. Can the ethiopian change his skin and leopard his spots; then you can do good who are accustomed to doing evil (13.23)
2. Heart of man is more deceitful than all else (Jer 17.9); the stain of their iniquity is always before God (Jer 2.22)
3. Jer 10 - a lengthy satire on the folly of idolatry

D. Hamartiology (doctrine of sin)

1. People commit two evils - Forsake God; Hew cisterns, broken ones that hold no water (Jer 2.13)
2. People weary themselves committing iniquity (Jer 9.5; Jer 13.22)

E. Christology

1. The Righteous Branch, the Lord our Righteousness (Jer 23.5-6)
2. The coming King and Kingdom (Jer 33.14-18)

F. Soteriology (doctrine of salvation)

1. New Covenant - Jer 31.31-34
2. Forgiveness of sin & repentance (Jer 36.3)
3. Repentance - Jer 3.12-14; 15.19; 25.5; 26.3; 35.15** (the root *repent/turn* 27x in Jer)
4. Trust in the LORD - Jer 17.7
5. Hear the heart of God in urging/calling for repentance: Jer 35:15!

G. Israelology (doctrine of the nation of Israel)

1. God’s words of faithless Israel (Jer 3) & his invitation of repentance
2. God’s faithfulness to Israel as a nation will not pass away (Jer 31.35ff; Jer 33.19-26)

H. Eschatology (doctrine of last things/end times)

1. God’s judgment & wrath surely will come for sin (Jer 16.18; Jer 50.29*; 51.56**)
2. God will bring them back to the Land for the Kingdom (Jer 32)
3. They will be restored back to the land & live in peace (Jer 33)
4. Babylon, the city, [the same Babel of Gen 11 and the same Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar of Jeremiah’s time] will be rebuilt & established & utterly devastated in the eschaton (Jer 50-51//Rev 17-18)

V. The STRUGGLES of Jeremiah

***MAJOR TRIALS OF JEREMIAH**

1. trial by death threats (11:18-23)
2. trial by isolation (15:15-21)
3. trial by imprisonment (19:14-20:18 - Pashur the priest who persecutes him)
4. trial by arrest/plotted to murder Jeremiah (26:7-24)
5. trial by challenge/false prophets (28:10-16, Hananiah; or Jer 14:13ff; 23:9ff)
6. trial by destruction (36:1-32)
7. trial by violence and imprisonment (37:15)
8. trial by starvation (38:1-6)
9. trial by chains (40:1)
10. trial by rejection (42:1-43:4)

*Jeremiah was a **weeping prophet** to a **wayward people**.*

The more one knows God, the more one weeps for the ungodly; the more one is sensitive to God’s holiness, man’s heinousness, he stands & proclaims courageously the IMMINENCY of God’s fierce wrath & the EXCLUSIVITY of repentance & faith to be delivered! O let us learn! Urgent! Urgent! Spiritual maturity!

Jeremiah is a man of spiritual maturity, courage, deep emotion, compassion, and integrity (Leon Wood).

- ➔ **The similarities between JESUS & JEREMIAH** (adapted from Charles Feinberg):
 - ▶ The people of Jesus’ day noted these similarities (Matt. 16:14 - who do people say that I am?...”Jeremiah”).
 - ▶ In both of their cases: Jerusalem was about to fall, the temple would suffer destruction soon, the worship of Yahweh had become a formalistic chore, and there was need for emphasis on an individual repentance toward God.
 - ▶ Both men had a message for Israel and the whole world.
 - ▶ Both of them used nature quite extensively for illustrative purposes in their teaching.
 - ▶ Both came from a high tradition/heritage: Jeremiah from a priestly, prophetic heritage, and Jesus from a divine, royal position.

JEREMIAH: A Jet Tour Thru Jeremiah — “A Society That’s Drowning in Sin & God’s Man Proclaims Imminent Judgment & Sure Hope for All Who Repent & Turn to God!”

- ▶Both were very conscious of their call from God -- both from young ages.
- ▶Both condemned the commercialism of temple worship in their day (7:11; Matt. 21:13 - Jesus even quotes Jer 7!).
- ▶Their enemies charged both of them with political treason.
- ▶Both experienced persecutions, trials, and imprisonments.
- ▶Both foretold the destruction of the temple (7:14; Mark 13:2).
- ▶Both wept over Jerusalem (9:1; Luke 19:41).
- ▶Both condemned the priests of their day & corrupt religious leaders (Jer 22, 23)
- ▶Both experienced rejection by members of their own families (12:6; John 1:11).
- ▶Both were so tenderhearted that some Jewish leaders identified them with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.
- ▶Both loved the nation of Israel deeply & longed for Israel to repent & be reconciled to God. Both spoke of God’s faithfulness to faithless Israel; both promised future earthly kingdom where Messiah would rule as King over Israel.
- ▶Both walked closely & intimately with God (20:7; John 11:41-42)

VI. The LESSONS of Jeremiah

Some encouraging lessons for us:

1. Jer 1-20 - here’s a man of God in difficult times who was an effective & faithful mouthpiece for God; and we get to peek inside his heart & life behind the scenes.
2. God used this faithful young man mightily. God can -- and often does! -- use *young people* totally submitted to Him, obedient to Him, dependent on Him, and walking in His Word. (Jeremiah may have been a teen!).
3. He expressed his struggles and anguishes and honest prayers that many other OT prophets didn’t verbalize/or write down (pour out your heart to God in prayer!)
4. God uses ORDINARY people who are willing to do PRECISELY what God commands
5. God can even use people who question God at times; and who feel inadequate & who don’t know *why* or *what* God is doing in certain situations. But we live by what we **know** to be true, not how we *feel* in a moment.
6. Even when we don’t know WHY God does what He does, we CALL out to God and TRUST Him entirely.
7. Jeremiah is a faithful preacher who preaches the FULL counsel of God’s message to Judah; he doesn’t preach what tickles ears or draws crowds or brings **superficial results**; the prophet’s job is to convey faithfully the FULL message that God has given to him [he is God’s *mouthpiece*].
8. Jeremiah doesn’t stop being **faithful** when it seems he’s not being **fruitful**. Keep being faithful to God, obedient to God, leave the results of ministry to GOD! Obey God & do what He says; let God handle the rest.

JEREMIAH: A Jet Tour Thru Jeremiah — “A Society That’s Drowning in Sin & God’s Man Proclaims Imminent Judgment & Sure Hope for All Who Repent & Turn to God!”

****A Note on Eschatology (hermeneutics, comparing Scripture with Scripture) --**

- Take note of Jeremiah’s lengthiest & most blistering condemnation of **BABYLON**

The future fulfillment of judgment for Babylon in Jeremiah 50–51 (note what’s not happened yet):

1. Babylon was never destroyed suddenly (Jer. 51:8).
 2. Babylon was never destroyed completely (Jer. 50:13, 26, 39b-40; 51:29).
 3. Babylon’s building materials were reused to build other cities (Jer. 51:26).
 4. God’s people never fled the city as they were commanded (Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45).
 5. Israel and Judah were never reunited after Babylon fell (Jer. 50:4-5, 20; 51:50).
 6. Babylon **is** not a heap of ruins; a haunt of jackals; it’s rebuilt today! (51.37-40)
- Much of Jer 50-51 has not yet (to this day!) been fulfilled yet! But it will, it shall, it must, just as God spoke! It’s the judgment on Babylon in Rev 17-18 that will come in the eschaton!
 - Rev 17-18 uses language from Jer 50-51 to show that the Babylon of Jeremiah is the Babylon of the future Trib.
 - With this, God will repay her fully/ double/ fierce judgment (the center-hub of rebellion against God) = Jer 51.56

****The Glory of the New Covenant**

- Jer 31-33 is the **centerpoint** and **hope** in the book
- ch.31 - Israel's mourning turned to gladness & salvation!
- 31:31ff - the glory of the **NEW COVENANT**
- Consider these features of the New Covenant as described by Jeremiah:
 - ▶ made with ethnic, national Israel (31.31) & church is included (Heb 8!)
 - ▶ not like the old Israelite, Mosaic covenant (31.32)
 - ▶ it involves the internalization of God's truth (31.33)
 - ▶ it involves intimate relationship with God (31.33)
 - ▶ it culminates when all people know the LORD (31.34)
 - ▶ it involves Israel being forgiven of their iniquity (31.34)
 - ▶ it is sure to happen to national Israel (31.35-37)

"Jeremiah labors for more than 40 years proclaiming a message of doom to the stiff-necked people of Judah. Despised and persecuted by his countrymen, Jeremiah bathes his harsh prophecies in tears of compassion."

(David Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa)