

# Jeremiah

**Authorship:** Jeremiah, whose prophesies were recorded by his secretary, Baruch (see 36:4, 32) and collected by an unknown compiler:

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

As Baruch noted, Jeremiah's actual words end at 51:64; chapter 52 – especially 52:31-34, which reflects a time well into the exile – may have been added by a disciple of Jeremiah. (Note that 52:31, 33 speaks of "Jehoiachin," who elsewhere in Jeremiah, in some translations, is called Jeconiah or Coniah.) Chapter 52 is almost identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30. From the text of this 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 4:19, 8:21; 9:1; 10:19). The Old Testament mentions eight other Jeremiahs, including two others mentioned in this book (35:3; 52:1).

**Date and Location:** Jeremiah apparently compiled these prophesies and edited his work following the 586 B.C. fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied during the Judah era; his ministry began during Josiah's reign of spiritual reform. However, the prophet experienced the spiritual hardness of Judah as the people continued in their sin, even into the Exile era. Jeremiah was born in the small town of Anathoth around 646 B.C. He probably died in Egypt not long after writing the book. Growing up in a priestly family, he was called into prophetic ministry around 626 B.C., the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (1:2). He seems to have come from relative obscurity, since he was not well known as a prophet during Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22:14).

**Message:** Repent in light of Jerusalem's fall. Jeremiah calls on Judah to repent of its many grievous sins in light of certain destruction coming from Babylon in the north. Though judgment is pervasive in his messages, Jeremiah still brings promise of a future hope and a new covenant. When the Babylonian captivity becomes certain, Jeremiah calls on Judah to submit to the Babylonians. He makes this plea despite harsh opposition from the lying prophets and the unyielding Judean kings. The book closes with a record of prophesies against the enemies of Judah, climaxing with the destruction of powerful Babylon.

**Purpose:** Jeremiah proclaimed God's word concerning the following five areas:

- (1) God: To proclaim that God created and controls everything (see 10:12-16; 32:26-27);
- (2) Sin: To show that the seriousness of Judah's sin demanded divine punishment;
- (3) God's remedy for sin: To introduce the radical, once-for-all solution to sin – the divine gift of a new heart (31:31-34; 33:6-9);
- (4) God's person to provide the remedy: To predict the renewal of the Davidic kingship by the coming Messiah (the "Branch," 23; 33), who would save Israel from its sins (23:6; 33:16);
- (5) God's plan for redeemed humanity: The Messiah will one day establish his millennial kingdom, free from the curse of sin and death (see 23:1-8; 30:9; 33:14-18). In Jeremiah as in Isaiah, prophesies 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 30:10-11 and Isaiah 26:20-27;13).

## Outline:

### I. Historical prologue and the call of the prophet (1)

### II. Prophetic ministry to Judah (2-45)

- A. Prophesies from the reign of Josiah (2-20)
- B. Prophesies from the reign of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (21-39)
- C. Ministry after the fall of Jerusalem (40-45)

### III. Prophesies against the nations (46-51)

### IV. Historical epilogue and the fall of Jerusalem (52)

#### Key Verse

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11 ESV).

#### Key Term: "Curse"

Jeremiah was the original "doomsday prophet." He called people to repent, but his main message was that Judah had fallen under the curse of God and was doomed to Babylonian exile because of its refusal to turn from sin.

#### Meaning of Name

Jeremiah, the sixth and seventh-century Israelite prophet from Judah, has given his name to this book as its composer. In Hebrew, his name probably means either "The LORD Exalts" or "The LORD throws Down."

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