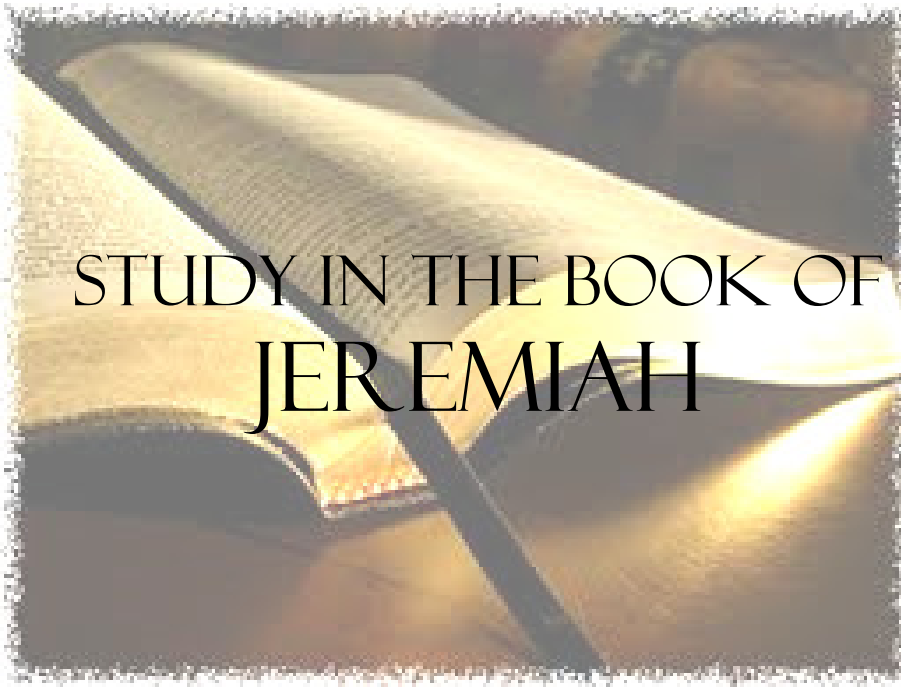


Footprints



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



By: Bishop Warwick Cole-Edwardes

Footprints into Africa

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Author and Date

Jeremiah, who served as both a priest and prophet, was the son of a priest named Hilkiyah. He was from the village of Anathoth, today called Anata, about three miles North East of Jerusalem in Benjamin's tribal inheritance. A scribe, named Baruch, to whom Jeremiah dictated and who copied and had custody over the writings compiled from the prophet's messages, assisted him in ministry. Jeremiah has been known as "the weeping prophet", living a life of conflict because of his predictions of judgement by the invading Babylonians. He was threatened, tried for his life, put in stocks, forced to flee from Jehoiakim, publicly humiliated by a false prophet, and thrown into a pit.

Jeremiah carried out a ministry directly mostly to his own people in Judah, but which expanded to other nations at times. He appealed to his countrymen to repent and avoid God's judgement via an invader. Once invasion was certain after Judah refused to repent, he pleaded with them not to resist the Babylonian Conqueror in order to prevent total destruction. He also called on delegates of other nations to heed his counsel and submit to Babylon, and he predicted judgements from God on various nations.

The dates of his ministry, which spanned 5 decades, are from the Judean king Josiah's 13th years (627 BC), to beyond the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 BC. After 586 BC, Jeremiah was forced to go with a fleeing remnant of Judah to Egypt. He was possibly still ministering in 570 BC. A rabbinic note claims that when Babylon invaded Egypt in 568/67 BC Jeremiah was taken captive to Babylon. He could have lived even to pen the book's closing scene in 561 BC in Babylon, when Judah's king Jehoiakin, captive in Babylon since 597 BC, was allowed liberties in his last days.

Jeremiah, if still alive at that time, was between 85 and 90 years old.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

EVENTS

To understand Jeremiah's prophecy requires close scrutiny of his time because of:

The critical events in the political world of his day - events in which Judah was directly affected.

The numbers of kings in Judah who reigned during his career and with whom he had close contact. Jeremiah was a national and international figure. 639-609 BC - the reign of Josiah 609 BC (3 months) - the reign of Jehoahaz 609 -597 BC - the reign of Jehoiakim 597 BC (3 months) - the reign of Jehoiachin 597 - 586 BC - the reign of Zedekiah 586 BC - the

assassination of Gedaliah.

Events of significance during this period are as follows:

626 BC - the Call of Jeremiah
612 BC - the Fall of Nineveh
609 BC - the Death of Josiah at Megibbo
605 BC - the Battle of Carchemish and the fall of the Assyrian Empire
605 BC - the 1st siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar
597 BC - the 2nd siege of Jerusalem
586 BC - the Final siege of Jerusalem, beginning the Babylonian captivity Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar and conqueror of Assyria, came from Chaldea, a province in the southern part of Babylonia, and reigned from 625 to 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar, the most famous of the Babylonian monarchs, ruled from 605 to 562 BC.

The times of Jeremiah are among the most important in OT history; thus, details are essential. Because of their great significance, they are the best - documented times in all of Israel's history. The Book of Jeremiah is so filled with historical, biographical, and autobiographical material that his life can be synchronized with dates and known events to a degree unparalleled in the writings of other prophets.

The world that Jeremiah was in was one of commotion and revolution. During Jeremiah's ministry, Judah was under the dominion of Assyria, Egypt, and then Babylonia.

During the more than 4 decades of his service, five epochal events occurred:

1. The dissolution of the Assyrian Empire after the death of Ashurbanpal (669-c. 630 BC).
2. The fall of the empire (612 BC)
3. The emergence of the Babylonian Empire under the Chaldeans
4. The defeat of Egypt, Assyria's confederate, by the Chaldeans and Medes at Carchemish (605 BC)
5. The Fall of Jerusalem with the destruction of the Solomon's temple (586 BC). Geographically and politically Judah was in a vulnerable position in the power politics of Egypt and Assyria. In the 8th century BC. Isaiah had warned against trusting Egypt and had keenly evaluated the threat of Assyria. By God's protection, the kingdom of Judah had escaped Sennacherib's forces. But from the godly reign of Hezekiah, the nation declined to the lowest spiritual depths under the godless reign of Manasseh. If Jeremiah was called in his early 20s, he lived in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon. Under Manasseh's long, apostate reign of 55 years. Judah was then under Assyrian power; so to please his overlords, Manasseh introduced syncretistic elements into the Temple worship at Jerusalem. The

northern kingdom already exiled, the remnant the Assyrian power conquered Egypt; but the latter regained strength under Psammetik I (664-609 BC), so that Judah found herself balancing off one great power against the other.

RULERS

1. Josiah

Josiah came to the throne when he was eight. Politically, Assyria under strong opposition from Babylon, fighting to survive. This gave Judah more freedom to throw off Assyrian elements in her worship. In 633 BC, Josiah sought the Lord; his reforms began in 629 BC; and in 623 - 622 BC, the Book of the Law was found in the temple. But the reforms did not last. In 609 BC, Pharaoh Neco of Egypt joined Assyria to strengthen them.

Josiah, though he had been warned by Neco, interfered and lost his life at the Battle of Megiddo. But Babylon, stronger than Egypt, dominated the world scene under Nabopolassar of Chaldea, ruler of Babylonia by 625 BC and the destroyer of Nineveh in 612 BC. His son, Nebuchadnezzar II succeeded him and reigned for 43 years, having defeating Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates River in 605 BC. Thereafter Babylon was master of the world.

For years, Jeremiah steadily counselled against Judah's involvement in world politics.

When the people refused his counsel, he repeatedly entreated them to surrender to the superior forces of Babylon, who at that time were an instrument for carrying out God's will.

2. Jehoahaz

Distraught over the calamitous death of godly Josiah, the people took matters into their own hands and set Jehoahaz, son of Josiah on the throne. In 3 months of rule he manifested an anti-Egypt and pro-Babylon policy, for which he was deposed by Pharaoh Neco. In his place, Neco set on the throne Eliakim, oldest son of Josiah and half - brother of Jehoahaz, changing his name to Jehoiakim.

3. Jehoiakim

The reign of this king was the time of Jeremiah's greatest trial and opposition. Politically, king and prophet were diametrically opposed, the king favouring Egypt and Jeremiah counselling submission to Babylon. Spiritually, the two were even farther apart. Jehoiakim has been characterized as the most ungodly of all Judah's kings. In Jehoiakim's 11-year reign, the Battle of Carchemish took place. It was an event of permanent significance, for it marked the transfer of power over the Middle East from Egypt to Babylon. It was the turning point of the period and had important consequences for Israel's future. The Babylonians made Jehoiakim their vessel. Jehoiakim sponsored idolatry and had no concern for the widespread social injustice in his realm. Of all the kings under whom Jeremiah prophesied, Jehoiakim was the most inveterate foe of the message and messenger of God. In 598 - 597, he revolted against Babylon but was unsuccessful, thus adding to Judah's problems. In Jehoiakim's time, Jeremiah was persecuted, plotted against,

maligned, and imprisoned. The king destroyed his written prophecies, but the prophet did not t serve from his divine commission. Jehoiakim died violently in Jerusalem in 598 - 597 BC, in the 11th year of his rule, as Jeremiah had predicted.

4. Jehoiachin

Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who reigned for only 3 months. But this teenage king ruled long enough to reveal himself as a wicked monarch, whom Jeremiah strenuously denounced. Jehoiachin's father's rebellion against Babylon forced Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem in 597 BC, when Jehoiachin capitulated. He was exiled to Babylon with many of Judah's upper class and the temple was plundered. Jehoiachin was a prisoner for 37. He was released by Evil - Merodach, son, and successor of Nebuchadnezzar.

5. Zedekiah

Among the accomplishments of the Nebuchadnezzar were king making and name changing. Nebuchadnezzar set on the Judean throne Mattaniah, a son of Josiah, full brother of Eliakim and uncle of Jehoiachin, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah, weak, vacillating, deficient in personality, found it beyond him to exert effective governing leadership. A puppet of Babylon, to whose king he had sworn allegiance in the name of the God of Israel, he was checkmated in every decision by the pro-Egyptian policy of his officials. Zedekiah's relationship with Jeremiah was close than any previous Judean king. But he was powerless to protect Jeremiah from the vicious designs of the nobles and to follow the God - given counsel Jeremiah ceaselessly reiterated about submitting to Nebuchadnezzar. In the 4th year of his reign, Zedekiah had plotted rebellion against Babylon with a confederacy of the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. This was their object in sending representatives to Jerusalem. The plot was denounced by Jeremiah and ultimately came to nothing. The end however was not far off. In the 9th year of his reign (588 BC),

Zedekiah conspired with Pharaoh Hophra against Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon responded with an invasion of Judah, which ended when the city fell in the summer of 586 BC. Throughout the siege, Jeremiah urged Zedekiah to surrender.

At one point, the approach of the Egyptian army compelled the withdrawal off Babylon's forces, but the siege was resumed. Meanwhile because of the cowardly attitude of Zedekiah, Jeremiah was mistreated by his enemies in Judah. The destruction of Jerusalem was the greatest judgement of God on Israel in the OT. Zedekiah, captured as he tried to escape, his sons were slain before him, and his eyes blinded, was carried to Babylon with a company of his subjects.

After the destruction of the city and temple, the king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah governor of Judah. After a brief period, Gedaliah was murdered by a scion of the Davidic house. Fearing reprisal from Babylon, the survivors of this tragedy fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch by force with them.

BROAD SURVEY OF THE BOOK

Five principle doctrinal teachings emerge from Jeremiah's ministry:

1.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

God is sovereign over individuals, as demonstrated in His calling, sending, and protecting His prophet Jeremiah. God is sovereign over His covenant community, as demonstrated in His calling Judah back to faithfulness and His judgement of them when they refused to change their ways. God is Sovereign over all the nations of the earth, as demonstrated in His using of Babylon to chastise His people, and in the oracles of judgement on all Judah's neighbours, including Babylon, even though none of them acknowledged Him.

2.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

God is faithful to His people, both to assist them in living the life to which He has called them and to protect them when danger threatens. He is also faithful to His Word, performing what He has promised when His people are faithful to Him, and executing the judgement He has proclaimed when His people become unfaithful and refuse to repent.

3.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITHFULNESS IN GOD'S PEOPLE

God's people must be faithful to Him. Especially is this true of leaders who are responsible for influencing and directing the course that the people take. Ultimately, faithfulness is the responsibility of each individual member of the covenant community, because each member, by remaining within the community, has made a personal commitment to the covenant.

4.

THE GRACE OF GOD

God is gracious to His people. God's first calling and the initial establishment of a relationship with His people is of grace. God is gracious to warn His people when they begin to stray from faithfulness to Him and the covenant. Even God's judgement is of grace, for to let His people go on unimpeded in their rebellion would be ultimately to allow them to destroy themselves completely. God's judgement rescues them from themselves. God is gracious in the promise of restoration after judgement. The present judgement is not the end of God's dealing with His people. He will restore them to Himself in righteousness.

5.

GOD'S PROMISE OF A NEW COVENANT

In Jeremiah, of course, the restoration was foreseen in the promise of the New Covenant. Jeremiah's vision of the new covenant was his most distinctive contribution. God would not allow His people to repeat forever the cycle of rebellion and failure. He would initiate a new covenant and engrave it upon the heart, so that the old problem of chronic disobedience would be solved. It was in the events of Calvary and Pentecost that Jeremiah's vision of the new covenant was fulfilled.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

BOOK 1 (CHAPTERS 1-20)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION (1:1-19)

1. Jeremiah, Priest of Anathoth (1:1-3)

Anathoth was a town 3 miles North/East of Jerusalem and was assigned to and inhabited by priests (Jos 21:13-19) 1 Chr 6:57-60). Jeremiah was born to a father who was a priest and his father's name was Hilkiyah. The name Jeremiah means Yahweh is high or Yahweh appoints. Jeremiah was called to be a prophet, a word bearer in 627 (1:2) during the reign of Josiah, his ministry continued during the reign of 2 main kings Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. The time span to which he was called was 627-when Jerusalem went into exile.

2. Jeremiah, Prophet to the Nations (1:4-19)

a. Sovereign appointment (1:4-10)

God showed his sovereignty
God showed his foreknowledge
Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you
Divine plan
God caused him to be born for that task.
Separated for holy service
God appointed him to be a prophet to his own people and
spokesperson to the nations.

Jeremiah's feeling of incompetence

Divine assurance (v8) He was told to put his dependence on God.

The anointing of God on Jeremiah (v9-10)

He is anointed to go and speak to the nations. He experienced that God had placed words in his mouth. The words God gave him were of doom and death, and hope and life (31:31).

b. Sovereign Word (1:11-16)

Jeremiah was to be the mere channel of God's word. To illustrate the nature of God's words he was given two prophetic visions:

Branch of an Almond tree (v11-12)

He sees a branch of an almond tree, Hebrew word *shaqued*-means awake, watching-*shoqued*. The Almond tree was the first to blossom (awake), illustration of God's Word. It was a symbol of awakening that befitted God's Word, 1st

flowering plant to wake these people.

The boiling Cauldron (v13-15)

It was designed to show the forthcoming event in the life of Israel-judgement for sin from the North-Assyria, but in Jeremiah it is Babylon (25:9), there were two main sins:

Deserting God

Idolatry:

Burning incense to idols and worshipping man-made things.

Fulfillment of judgment came in 586 with the fall of Jerusalem.

c. Sovereign Protection (1:17-19)

We find here the assurance of God's protection, he settles Jeremiah's terror we see God's description of his protection, God will personally protect Jeremiah, if he does not testify God will terrify him before the people.

MAJOR LESSON - If you are certain of your calling from God you need to trust him in proclaiming his word and trust him with your lives.

DISCOURSES (2:1-20:18)

Public Sermons (2:1-10:25)

1. **Backsliding Israel** (2:1-37)

An Unfaithful wife (2:1-8)

The basic message is God's remorse over Israel. The image here is of love and marriage, Israel was the bride they used to follow him through the wilderness.

Holy witness to God's workings

Jeremiah's generation had deserted God, the way of their forefathers.

A Degenerate Vine (2:9-25)

The basic question is God's why? To their evil choices v9-13) We see Israel has given up her glory for that which did not profit her.

(v14-19) Another corrupt choice of Israel is further revealed. They are slaves and prey to other people because they had forsaken God. Notice Israel has chosen servant-hood to other nations not God. God's question is "haven't they brought this on themselves?"

(v20-25) God has planted Israel as a noble vine, how then

did they degenerate into a wild vine. Their sin was internal, deeper than surface dirt. Their lust for pleasure and flirting with strangers had blinded their eyes to their sin.

A Caught Thief (2:26-37)

God's judgement for a persistent sin, God predicts the future that tomorrow always catches up with the sinner. 2:26-Israel is found as a thief in her shame because she turned to idols. 2:27-the irony is that thought they turned to idols they cry out to God. 2:28-God's answer is where are your gods?

There were three sins:

Refusal to receive correction (v30)

They have forgotten God (v32)

They changed their ways to win the favour of men and nations Egypt and Assyria(v36).

2. A Call to Return to God (3:1-4:4)

v1- God's grace is outshining the searchlight of God's law Dt 24:1-4). God gave Israel the opportunity to come back.

Return Wholeheartedly (3:2-10)

The situation here is that Judah has not returned wholeheartedly to God.

V2-3-God's judgement on Judah for wickedness, e.g. no crop producing rain.

V4-We see Judah repents outwardly.

V5-Outward repentance disguised their evil deeds.

V6-8-Describes Israel as being a prostitute with idols, she had sinned, refused to turn to God therefore, she was judged.

V9-10-Judah did the same as Israel and there was no heart change.

Return for Future Restoration (3:11-18) V12-13:

They are to return by acknowledging their sin and disobedience.

A return of heart will bring a blessing from God.

Repentance would result in restoration.

Their returning in heart would be led by God.

The old covenant would give way to the glory of the new.

V17-Israel would be the centre of the world religions and be blessed through it and all the nations of the world would converge on it.

Return in Repentance (3:19-25)

V19-22-it is a dramatic dialogue, God says how he would treat them as sons, but they reject him. There is the imagery of a husband and an unfaithful wife, which describes their unfaith fullness to God.

V22-God says return and he will deal with their backsliding.

V22-25-People responded by confessing their sin.

Return for Present Deliverance (4:1-4)

The condition of their hearts is summed up in v1, if you will return; it implies that Jeremiah is begging them to move back to God.

V4-God's wrath would not have gone forth if they had returned to him.

3. Woes of the Judgements from the North (4:5-31)

Seen in the Invaders Assignment (v5-18)

Emblems:

Lion (v7-9)

Babylon is called a lion, tears apart people, v7-destroys nations, v9-disrupt leadership.

V10-take away national peace

Hot Wind (v11-13)

They are to lay bear, ruin, antagonize lives and livelihood. The Lord uses an example the hot Sirocco east wind of the spring. This air mass that descends on Palestine would last for 3-7 days, it was hot and dry and dust laden air, and it affects the people severely:

Irritability of temper

Crops are destroyed

The possessions were damaged

Watchers (Besiegers) (v14-18)

No one is to go in or out, watch for a strategic time to strike, symbolize the eyes of the divine Judge, He sees thoughts, desires, and motives of the heart determines the moment of judgement.

Seen in Jeremiah's Anguish (v19-26)

Jeremiah's heart is in anguish it is being wrenched (v19).

The inevitable fact of total and sudden destruction (v20)

Inexcusable foolishness of his people(v22).

Barrenness of the land during judgement(v23-26).

Seen in the Inalterable purposes of God (v27-31)

Divine decree (v27)-the whole land will be given over to desolation.

V28-The inalterable purposes of God, 2 vain attempts to dissuade God:

Lure of vain dress (v30).

Lure of a pitiabale cry for help (v31).

4. Exposure of the Enemies Within (5:1-31)

Untaught laity and taught leaders (v1-6)

V1-God has Jeremiah search the streets of Jerusalem for people or a person who lived justly and sought the truth. He sought out the common masses and they have refused correction.

Their leaders have severed ties with God.

Covenant signers and covenant preachers (v7-19)

The covenant children have sworn by other gods (v7a)

The prophets representing Judah and Israel had rejected God (v12)-prophets of wind, denied the true word of God (v13), the most influential enemies of Judah were within. The true prophet spoke God's Word of fire (v14). (v15-18) - warning of the mighty Babylonians coming to devour them. (V19)-the foreign nations are going to take the people captive to foreign lands. The covenant people of God have chosen other gods.

Breakers of boundaries and overpassers in wickedness (V20-31)

God's sovereign decree (v22)

He set the boundaries of the sea and land. The basis of his sovereign decree is that his people should fear him.

V23-25-God's people have gone over the boundaries placed around them by God's word.

V26-31-The people's wickedness prevails.

V30-The nation is in a terrible state.

Reason

V31-Prophets prophesied falsely

Priests ruled presumptuously

People love it this way

5. A City to be Visited (6:1-30)

A forewarned city (v1-8)

V1-Jerusalem was not without warning.

V3-5-The zealous intent of the invaders that were coming is shown.

V6-God's decree of punishment.

V8-warning of being alienated from God.

An abominable city (v9-21)

V10-the prophet's question why he should be speaking

No one will listen.

Their ears are closed.

Message is offensive to them.

They find no pleasure in it.

V11-description of how the prophet will pour out God's words of wrath on the people.

V13 Sin of covetousness.

V13-14-False leadership.

V15 Abomination - they have no shame.
V16-17 God appeals to them to walk in their old path.
V17 The people's response is that they will not listen.
V16-19 Their stubbornness and rejection of the law.
V20-False sacrifices.

A mourning city (v22-26)

Reference of invaders is to Babylon.

V23 Cruel and merciless.

V24-People are fearful.

V23-25-they are formidable and fearsome.

V26-Prophets appeal.

A tried city (v27-30)

It is figurative truth of God's attempts to purge his people of their sinful ways.

V27-one of Jeremiah's task is to test and analyse their actions.

V28-the people were likened to brass and iron because they were hardened rebels who went about slandering, they were corrupt.

V29-People are likened to contaminated silver, which is refined and declared impure.

V30-they are refused silver because the Lord has rejected them.

6. False trusts that cannot Profit (7:1-8:3)

Trusting in religion (7:1-15)

V4-the temple building itself had become the people's object of worship.

V8-it originated in the lying of false prophets.

V9-the people freely sinned.

V10-11-the empty religious chant.

They expect to be safe when they come to God.

V11-they turned God's house into a hangout for murders (Matt 21:13) (Mk 11:17) (Lk 19:46).

Trusting in heathen gods (7:16-20)

They had false trust that could not profit them.

V17-false trust turned from the temple to houses of the people. They showed their devotion to the Queen of heaven, the ancient deity of Babylon ISHTAR (Jer. 44:17-19, 25)

V18-the offer cake and drink offerings to her.

Trusting in self (7:21-28)

They were trusting in offerings and sacrifices and not from a heart of worship.

V23-25 The prophet's message to return.

V23-Covenant renewed.

V24+26-Jeremiah was sent to relay the message to the people.

The Judgements (7:29-8:3)

The judgements would reflect the sin of idolatry.

V29-God had abandoned that particular generation.

V30-31-the penalty for false trust and worship resulted in terrible judgement.

Tophath - place of child sacrifices, but it became the Valley of Slaughter in judgement(v31-33).

Worship of celestial bodies (8:1-2).

Those spared death (7:34+8:3).

Judgement would spoil the very experience of living and the despair of living, they preferred death to life.

7. Rejection of God's Word (8:4-17)

The people reject the Word (8:4-7).

The word in Hebrew for "know" is used in a sense to live by and obey. The example used is how the birds know their time for migration.

8:5-people had disobedient hearts refusing to return.

8:4-they came from a fallen condition.

God's ministers do not teach the word (8:8-12.)

8:8-false interpretation of Jeremiah's words.

V10-11-prophets and priests spoke falsely and all of them practiced deceit.

Doom is inevitable (8:13-17).

God's pronouncement of doom was brief (8:13), doom will utterly consume them (8:17) He will send snakes (8:14) the people will flee to the fortified cities (cities of refuge) to die with pride.

8. The Prophet's lament: We are not saved! (8:18-9:26)

1st Lamentation (8:18-9:6)

The things that crushed the heart of the prophet:

People's lost state was unnecessary.

8:19-22-because God was bestowing his grace upon them.

The utter degradation of the people's heart, which the prophet longed to be separated from them (9:2).

They are adulterous (9:2), untruthful, untrustworthy and deceivers (9:4-6).

This is the description of their lost state.

(9:7-9) God's answer: the revelation of God's righteous judgement, for deceit there must be judgement.

2nd Lamentation (9:10-11)

Desolation of the land and everything in it.

The judgement is for:
Forsaking God's law.
Disobedience.
Stubbornness.
Balaam worship (9:13-14), idolatry.

3rd Lamentation (9:17-22) "Death call" is an urgent call and they called professional wailers to cry "How ruined we are!"
God's answer (9:23-26)
V23-24-salvation is basically for all who know God
V25-26-Judgement is for all who are unbelievers at heart.

9. None like Jehovah (10:1-25)

There is no other God (10:1-5).

Here we find an example of the heathen nations:

They feared potentially destructive elements of nature.
Their fears led them to manufacture many "gods".
These gods were fashioned out of trees (10:3) covered with silver and gold (10:4).

There is no greater power on earth (10:6-11).
10:6-7-God is king over the nations.
10:7-there is no wise man like God.
10:11-and He is eternal God is the Sovereign ruler of world.

There is no other cause behind the universe (10:12-16).
God made the earth by His power, the world by His wisdom and the heavens by His understanding (v13).
V14-15-no idols could compete with God.

There is none like the Sovereign Judge (10:17-25).
Nothing could stop or change God's plan of judgement.
Those spurred should obey God's call (10:17). Wailing of unrepentant hearts could not stop judgement (10:22)
Justifiable petitions could be made to Him (10:24), but it is not for man to direct His steps (10:23-25). The prophet saw judgement in the light of an exalted reason being judged.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

BOOK 1 - SECTION 2

2) PERSONAL EXPERIENCES (11:1-20:18)

COVENANT AND CONSPIRACY: Jeremiah and the men of Anathoth
(11:1-20:18)

1. The Covenant stated (11:1-8)

God gave the word.

Israel was to obey the word (v3).

Israel will then be God's people if they obeyed (v4).

Jehovah would be their God.

Covenant contains a warning that there is a curse for disobedience.

V6-8-Positive Command.

(1) Listen and follow.

(2) Warning from historical settings (v7-8).

Stubbornness results in judgement.

2. The Covenant broken (11:9-17)

V9-conspiracy found among the men of Judah turning from God to Baal.

V10-they were breaking the covenant terms.

V14-17-national conspiracy and judgement reflected the sin.

3. The Covenant preacher threatened (11:18-23)

They have rejected God and his messenger, and the messenger is the subject of the conspiracy from his home town of Anathoth.

(1) They sought his life because of the message he preached.
(V19+21).

(2) Jeremiah was gentle and knew God would take vengeance.
(V20).

(3) God assures Jeremiah by revealing his judgement on them:
Men will die by the sword.

Children will die by famine.

There would be no remnant.

4. The Covenant preacher's question (12:1-6)

V1-2-why do the wicked prosper?

God asks him to compare Him with the wicked, compared with

Jeremiah they deserved to be slaughtered.
V5-6-God's answer reveals a conspiracy.
The prophet's family had betrayed him.

5. The Covenant applied (12:7-17)

The covenants application brought one of two possible results:
11:3- cursing for breaking it.
11:4-5-blessing for obeying it.
12:7-God was compelled to forsake his house and heritage and gives it to the enemy.
12:14-even the evil nations who carry out his judgement will also be punished.
12:16-God would bless them if they swear by his name.

PRIDE OF JUDAH: Jeremiah and the linen girdle (13:1-27)

1) The pride exposed (13:1-14)

The linen belt represents Judah's pride.
V1-2-buy and wear it.
V3-5-hide it in a crevice.
V6-7-he was to recover it.
V9-11-God very clearly interpreted the symbolism for Jeremiah. God wanted Judah to cleave to him like a belt, their rejection of this relationship with God resulted in their becoming hidden away (worship and service).
V13-14-symbols of the jars prophesied a further side of judgement. Jeremiah was filled with the wine of God's anger (25:15), bringing in spiritual and mental drunkenness in the face of sudden judgement.

2) Surrender of Pride exhorted (13:15-17)

V15-be willing to listen, do not be proud, there is darkness and death, Jeremiah was weeping.

3) Pride punished (13:18-27)

A detailed description of God's judgement in the context of the sin of pride, national punishment involved the heads of state (v18). Fitting wail of judgement for they will not let God have their hearts.

THE DROUGHT: Jeremiah as the interceding prophet (14:1-22)

1. Present drought (14:1-6)

The drought brought languish or mourning on all levels of life in Judah from the highest to the lowest, farmers couldn't plough, animals couldn't live, some even forsook their young, wild donkeys eyes battled for want of pasture.

2. 1st Intercession

V7-admission of sin.

Jeremiah had a great love for his people and his country, and now in this draught, he prays for his country. "Oh Lord, do something for the sake of your Name."

V8-Interested God.

V9-An able God, the presence of God for Israelites still called by His name.

3. Future Famine (14:10-18)

V10-God acknowledged Jeremiah's intercession, but in v10, he tells Jeremiah that the people are too hard, they turn away from God and therefore they are going to be punished.

But the hardest thing for Jeremiah is in v 11 "Do not pray for the well-being of this people". Jeremiah stops praying!

V 12 - "Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry: though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with sword, famine and plague. God says to Jeremiah, only judgement will await this people. Again, Jeremiah is a man of God and he prays.

4. Second Intercession (13-18)

"But I said, ah Sovereign Lord".

The false prophets were telling the people not to listen to Jeremiah, and that it will be ok! "There will be no drought and no exile".

And the Lord says to Jeremiah "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name".

5. His 3rd Intercession (19-22)

He continues to plead with God, and his prayers reach a high pitch of emotion. He speaks of God in v 20 as being a forgiving God. In v 22 as an all-powerful creator.

FROM DESPONDING TO HOPE : JEREMIAH THE REJECTED INTERCESSOR

V 15 : 1-21

This chapter will remind us of 2 emails which gripped Jeremiah.

1) Despondency v 1-10

God says in v 1 "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to his people, send them away from my presence".

The day of doom has arrived.
He was told of his call, that he must first break down and destroy, and only then build up.

We now see Jeremiah not as the intercessor, but in this chapter, the man of compassion.

And in this chapter, he reaches a very low point in his life. He becomes discouraged and despairing.

v 10 "Woe is me, my mother, that has been born me".

We find him friendless, discouraged and frustrated. But God had never left them.

2) HOPE v 11-21

The Lord graciously comes to His servant and lifts him up out of the valley of despair.

And God says to him in v 20 "I am with you, to rescue you and save you".

And so his hope is in the Lord.

This section reminds us yet again that we also will face trials and heartaches, and one of the greatest lessons we can ever learn is this "your security and your significance is in the Lord".

In this place: Jeremiah alone in a punished place (16 : 1-18).

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

BOOK ONE - SECTION 3

IN THIS PLACE - JEREMIAH ALONE (10:1-18)

INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah would not have felt so lonely as he felt at this time. He felt all alone with nobody listening to his preaching.

But there was worse to come.

1) Grieves family deaths v 1-4

At this point his life, God says to Jeremiah, "You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place". The reason was that Jerusalem was going to fall.

2) No mourning or mirth v 5-9

Further more God said to him, "do not go to mourn or show sympathy because I have withdrawn my blessing, my love, my pity from this people".

Jeremiah is not to mourn for his people - he was to stand above - do not worry, do not be fearful.

3) Worse Evil v 10 - 13

The Lord explains to Jeremiah that when he preaches on the coming judgement - the people would simply ask "why"? And Jericho must say v 11 "Because your fathers have forsaken me".

4) Surrender to bondage v 14-15

The Israelites must not rebel against Babylon - God says they must surrender.

5) No Escapes v 16-18

The judgement is going to be total. Jerusalem is to be destroyed, the temple destroyed, and the people to exile no escape.

But the question is why did they not listen? And the reason is their hearts.

THE HEART : JEREMIAH REMAINS TRUE IN HEART (16:19 - 17:18)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and beyond cure, who can understand it"?

1) What the heart is by nature (v 9-11)

We often quote this passage - our hearts are deceitful, they are not good.

2) What the heart may choose (v 5-8)

Jeremiah explains how there are always two choices in life:

Good or evil
Between Man or God

v 5 will explain those who put their trust in man.
v 7 those who put their trust in the Lord.

3) Examples of Choices

To illustrate his sermon, Jeremiah uses three examples:

- a) Heathen nations v 19-21.
- b) Judah v 1-4.
- c) Jeremiah and his persecutors v 12-18.

These verses will see Jeremiah rising up from his despair to a point of trust in the Lord.

4) The law of the Sabbath : Jeremiah preaches at the City's gates (17 : 19-27).

The test of our love for the Lord is obedience. If we love the Lord, we obey Him. And Jeremiah will illustrate that with regards to the Sabbath.

The Action

Jeremiah goes to the gate where all the business people will go in and out with their goods and begins to preach.

The Words

He promises the people, that if they obey and honor the Sabbath God will bless them but where there is disobedience there will be cursing.

5) Lessons from pottery : Jeremiah learns and preaches from pottery v 18:1-20:18))

The next 3 chapters will draw book 1 to a close, which has recorded the sermons of Jeremiah.

They summarize what he has said, and draws everything to a climax by using the symbol of pottery.

Symbol of longsuffering 18:1-23)

Jeremiah goes to the potter's house to watch the potter make his clay pots. One of the pots that had been made, is not right, so he makes another one (he remakes it).

He was patient - in the same way, God is patient with us.

Symbol of Judgment (19:1 - 20:6)

Sometimes the potter has to throw away the broken and useless pots, and that is a symbol of judgement.

Conclusion

Book 1 now draws to a close. We have been given an insight into the character of Jeremiah and we have listened to his Sermons (Ch 1-20).

Book 2 from (Ch 21-33) will give us his later prophecies.

BOOK 2 - SECTION 2

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES (21-44)

INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah will now give us a record of his message and experiences which were given on the eve of the fall of Jerusalem.

"Book One" covered the reigns of King Josiah (640-609) and King Johoiakim (609 -597) but most of the chapters of "Book two" occur during the reign of Zedekiah (597-586).

He was the last of Judah's kings before Jerusalem fell in 597 BC.

LATER PROPHECIES (21:1-33:26)

1) THE SURE CAPTIVITY (21:1 - 29:32)

These verses will show us that the fall of Jerusalem was inevitable. She had wandered too far away from God.

a) THE DECREED JUDGEMENTS (21:1-25:38)

Now the judgments of God are more clearly spelt out than anytime else.

I. Against the Kings (21:1 - 23:8)

Jeremiah now speaks God's judgment against Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, then Jehoiakin.

Each of these three are going to see judgment.

II. Against the prophets (23:9-40)

In v 30 God says "behold, I am against the prophets".

Further God said, "both the prophet and the priest are godless.

Therefore, the people must not listen to what the false Prophets preach - all that they do is fill you with false hope.

III. Against Zedekiah (24:1-10)

IV. Against the people (25:1-11)

It is clearly stated in v 7, "but you did not listen to me, declares the Lord. You have provoked me with what your hands have made and you have brought harm onto yourselves".

V. Against Babylon (25:13-14)

Jeremiah clarifies that when the 70 yrs are over God would punish Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians.

VI. Other Nations (25:15-38)

Jeremiah has covered everybody in this section.

All that he now waits for is for the Babylonians to come, and for judgment.

2) THE AUTHORISED PROPHET (26:1-29:32)

a. Jeremiah's life spared (26:1-27)

In the previous five chapters the whole emphasis was on the certainty of Judgment, but now the emphasis changes, and the attention is placed on Jeremiah the man.

b. Authority v 12

To the leaders of Judah Jeremiah was guilty of blasphemy, and they called him to trial.

But he says in v 12 "Jehovah sent me" God sent me.

c. Message of warning v 12.

He was sent to warn Judah and judgment.

d. Message of motivation v 13

In the midst of his messages v 13 "amend your ways", he calls them to turn back to God.

e. Committed v 14

His faith is powerful; therefore, he says do with me whatever you want.

f. Warning v 15

If they put him to death, they would face God.

g. Authority v 15

He comes back to his authority.

As a result of this v 16 says "this man is not worthy of death", his life was spared again.

JEREMIAH - BOOK 2 CONTINUED

I. JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE AUTHENTICATED (27:1 - 29:32)

INTRODUCTION

Ch 27,28 will describe the events which took place during the 4th year of King Zedekiah.

It begins with the message: "This word came to Jeremiah from the Lord".

Again, it is not a message which Jeremiah brings up, it is a word from God.

(1) The Message (27:1-22)

(a) Nations must save Babylon v 1-11.

Eden, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon came to Jeremiah, and they wanted to unite and fight against Babylon.

But Jeremiah's message is very clear from God. Jer v 9 - they must listen to their prophets, they must not fight against Babylon but serve Babylon.

(b) Judah must serve Babylon (v 12-15).

(c) The Temple vessels were to go to Babylon (v16-22).

Not only will Jerusalem be destroyed with the temple, but even the vessels in the temple are going to go to Babylon. Jer v 1-17.

i) Opposition to the message judged ((28:1-17)

A false prophet, Hannaniah said Jeremiah was not right, and he said; within two years, Babylon's power would be crushed, and all the captives would return.

Both of these were false of course. The people loved to hear it, but it was false. And in v 17 Hannarich died.

ii) Other false prophets judged (29:1-32)

This section again describes the message of Jeremiah, the opposition from the false prophets, but Jeremiah withstood what they said.

2) THE ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE (30:1-33:26)

These chapters are full of the hope of salvation. And they came at the darkest hour for the country, but God says Jeremiah.

A Returned People (30:1-31:26)

- (a) Israel and Judah (30:1-22)
They have both gone through very difficult times.
They have both gone into exile.
- (b) Israel (30:23 - 31:22)
This section deals in detail with the future restoration of Israel.
- (c) Judah (31:23-26)
God is going to bring back His people after 70 years.
They will be a returned people.

3) A Complete Restoration (31:27-40)

I. A New Outlook (31:27-40)

Jeremiah's new prophesies a new beginning for the people of God (v27).

They would enjoy a new relationship with God (v28).

And there was a new emphasis of accountability to God (v29)

II. A New Covenant (31:31-37)

"The time is coming declared the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel". It will not be written on stone but on the heart.

It would be instituted by the coming Messiah.

III. A New City (31:38-40)

The city of Mt. Zion is going to be rebuilt, but even more... there is a reference to the New Jerusalem.

4) The Test of Faith (32:1-33:26)

What Jeremiah has been preaching now comes to pass.

32:2 "The coming of the King of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard".

The Babylonians have arrived!

His preaching was correct, and in their darkest hour, God gives to Jeremiah one of the most wonderful promises in the Bible.

Ch 33:3 "Call to me and I will answer you, and tell you great and unsearchable things you don't know". In that promise, God says, "I will make a righteous branch sprout from David's line.

Another beautiful reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Branch.

JEREMIAH - BOOK TWO (Cont)

1. DAYS OF FULFILMENT (34:1-44:30)

The Book of Jeremiah is unique among the prophetic books.

Because what he had been preaching and prophesizing ie. The fall of Jerusalem and its captivity in Babylon actually happens in his life.

This section 34-44 gives us a record of three things.

- 1.1. The siege of Jerusalem (v 38)
Fall (v39)
After the Fall (40-44)

The Siege of Jerusalem (34:1-38:28)

- 1.2. Outcome of the siege is re-stated 34:1-7
While Nebuchadnezzar's army was fighting against Jerusalem as well as its surrounding cities; while this was happening, God sent Jeremiah to King Zedekiah, and to tell him again that the outcome of the siege will be (v2).

"I am about to hand this city over to the King of Babylon.

In v4 Zedekiah himself would be taken as a slave.

- 1.3. The sin of the people renewed (34:8-35:19)
Even though the King had heard Jeremiah preach, instead of listening to him, he still tried to find ways of defeating the Babylonians.

It was the continual sin of disobedience, therefore they will go into exile.

This sin of disobedience is illustrated by what happened to the Rechabites.

- 1.4. The Prophet of God apprehended (30:1-38:28)
Throughout his life, Jeremiah had faced enormous opposition.

The princes' protect Jeremiah, the King opposes him
(30:1-32)

We are now told about Baruch(Jeremiah's secretary). And when Jeremiah's sermons were read the princes protected him. Whereas the king in Ch 36:20-26 that both Jeremiah and Baruch be put to death.

The Princes' oppose Jeremiah, the king protects him
(32:1-58:28)

As the kings changed, so Jeremiah experienced different treatments, but now it changes again.

The king protects and the princes oppose him.

The princes took him, tied a rope around him and dropped him into a well.

For 40 years, Jeremiah has preached, but now he faces a dark hour.

2. **THE FALL OF JERUSALEM** (39:1-18)

It was a bitter siege and after 18 months had passed there was no food in Jerusalem. The enemy broke through the wall.

2.1. The Fall (39:4-10)

It was a tragic day; the Babylonians totally destroyed Jerusalem and the king ran away to the Jordan valley, but he was captured and brought back to Nebuchadnezzar. His own sons were killed in front of him and his eyes were taken out.

All the houses were burnt and the majority went into exile.

2.2. The men delivered (39:11-18)

Only two men were delivered amazingly!
Jeremiah
Ebedmelech

A lovely reminder that God does not forget his children.

3. EVENTS IN JUDAH AFTER JERUSALEM'S FALL (40:1-44:30)

It was at this very sad point, with Jerusalem destroyed, the temple destroyed, the people taken into exile, it was here which Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations.

3.1. Governship of Gedaliah (40:1-41:18)

The governship of Gedaliah is described.

3.2. Migration to Egypt (42:1-43:7)

Some of the Jews who were left wanted to now leave and run to Egypt.

But Jeremiah says, "don't go - trust God alone". (42:10-12)but sadly, they disobeyed again.

3.3. Judgment of the Refugees (43:8-44:30)

In these final verses Jeremiah is now told by God what would happen to the Jews who stayed in the land of Egypt.

They were now to be judged (44:1-14)

Conclusion

We now come to the end of the book of Jeremiah.

The book does not record for us anymore about Jeremiah. In the same way the book of acts does not tell us about the last days of Paul.

All that now remains, in Ch 45:1-52:34 there are three sections which are now called supplements.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH (45:1-52:34)

INTRODUCTION

The message of the recorded prophecies of Jeremiah are now finished. But now at the end of the book are three sections which appear to be supplements to the main body of the prophecy.

1. GOD'S MESSAGE TO BARUCH (45:1-5)

This Chapter is dated in the 4th year of king Jehoiakim, and it could be placed chronologically after Ch 36.

The theme centres around the "scroll of prophecy", not around Baruch.

Baruch was the professional recorder of Jeremiah's prophecy, and became very involved with his message.

v3 "I am weary with my groaning".

God rebuked Baruch, it was sharp but brief. It said three things:

1.1. God's will concerns Judgment (45:4)

1.2. Do Not Seek Great Things for Yourself (45:5)

"Should you then seek great things for yourself, seek them not".

1.3. Only a Few will be saved (45:5)

3. GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE FOREIGN NATIONS (46:1-51-64)

Besides being a prophet to his own people Jeremiah was also called to be a prophet to the nations.

1:5 "Before I found you in the womb I know you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations".

This section thus describes the prophecies of God's judgment against Judah's neighbours.

Again chronologically, they would fit in after Ch 25.
He speaks to nine of the neighbours:

Egypt
Philistia
Moab
Amen
Edom
Damascus
Keder
Elam
Babylon

They describe God's judgements against each of these nations.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (52:1-34)

1. Fulfillment of Prophecy

This chapter concludes the book, describing the fall of Jerusalem, which was the fulfillment of all Jeremiah's prophecy.

2. Reference to Jehoiakin's release

In v 1-3 we are given a summary of Zedekiah's reign, and then, in v 4-23 a list of the temple objects which were destroyed.

v 24, 25 some of Judah's leaders that were taken captive.

v 28-30 - the deputations under Nebuchadnezzar.

Finally, from 31-34 Jehoiakin's release from prison.

Conclusion

We have seen why Jeremiah is sometimes called the weeping prophet. His heart was in his ministry. His message is relevant for today. We know more about Jeremiah than any other prophet.

After his call to the ministry of the Word, he served God with great faithfulness; sharing courage, at times being lonely and unappreciated.

But he was a man of great faith and hope, looking forward to the new covenant; a ministry of 40 years.