

# Jeremiah

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## The Authorship and Dating

The book ascribes its authorship to Jeremiah (1:1). Secretarial work is credited to Baruch (36:4). Jeremiah was born in Anathoth, a city north of Jerusalem (1:1; 29:27) as a son of the priest Hilkiah (2 Kings 22:4,8; 2 Chron 34:14). In 1:2 Jeremiah indicates that his prophecies began during the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (circa 627 B.C.). Given the book's claim, author's lineage, clear starting date as well as the book's major subject (the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.), Jeremiah's prophecies can be dated between 627-586 B.C.

## The Recipients

Jeremiah wrote to hardened Jerusalem and Judah during her last days before her fall to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.. The Hebrew nation expressed great disrespect to the prophet refusing to hear or believe that the Lord would judge Jerusalem. From Ezekiel 8-11 we understand that the nation was fully given over to idolatry.

## The Purpose

Jeremiah wrote in order to warn the people and leadership of Judah that immediate Judgment was lingering due to their sinful ways. Jeremiah prophesied during a time of great spiritual decline in Israel. Although Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of Josiah, his ministry took place after the wicked effects of Manasseh. Manasseh, it is said, did more to lead the country into wickedness than any other king (2 Kings 21). Jeremiah indicated that Judgment was sure. Jeremiah sternly warned the people of certain judgment.

## The Message

Concerning the text itself, there is a difference between the structure of the Greek LXX and the Hebrew Masoretic Text. There is good reason, however, to conclude that the Masoretic text represents the original.<sup>1</sup> While the transmission of text itself has had its obstacles, the interpretation of the text leaves no small task. Instead of chronological order the book organization relies on subject, audience and connective links all of which work to make the book more difficult to interpret.<sup>2</sup> Another writer indicates: "No Old Testament prophet used a wider

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<sup>1</sup> There is good evidence to believe even apart from the original edition of Jeremiah's prophecy, which was destroyed by Jehoiakim, there was a later edition which preceded the final form of the text as we have it in the Masoretic tradition. At least this is a reasonable deduction to draw from the Greek LXX, since it appears to be about one-eighth shorter than the Hebrew text of the MT. It differs also in the arrangement of chapters, for 46-51 of the MT are placed after 25 in the LXX, and they are arranged in a somewhat different sequence. Jeremiah 33:14-26 of the MT is altogether missing in the LXX. It would seem that this earlier edition was published in the prophet's own lifetime and first disseminated in Egypt. Later, after Jeremiah's death, it appears that his secretary, Baruch, made a more comprehensive collection of his master's sermons and rearranged the material in more logical order. The MT undoubtedly preserves the posthumous edition of Baruch. Gleason L. Jr. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*(Chicago: Moody Press, 1994). 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. Ronald B. Allen Earl D. Radmacher, H. Wayne House(Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999). 877.

variety of literary forms or showed more artistic skill than Jeremiah. And because Jeremiah used them in fresh and striking ways, his oracles have a vitality, vividness, and urgency unsurpassed in the Bible.”<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah’s message is almost entirely negative as the prophet was rejected, beaten and imprisoned until cordially saved by a foreigner.<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah also enjoys the position of being the longest book in the Bible having more words than any other.

The overall message is that of certain Judgment on Judah for their stubborn idolatry. After describing his personal call as a prophet (1), Jeremiah pronounced Judgment upon Judah (2-25). Although this brought Jeremiah into direct conflict with the spiritual leaders of his day (25-29) the prophet remained true not only recording future covenant benefits for Judah (30-33) but also their fall (34-45). In chapters 46-51 Jeremiah proclaims coming judgment upon Judah’s surrounding nations. The last chapter provides a historical affirmation of Judah’s punishment (52).

### **The Theme**

A Stern warning of Judgment for continued Idolatry

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<sup>3</sup> David Allan Hubbard William Sanford LaSor, Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey the Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, Second ed.(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996). 335.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament a Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*(Grand Raids: Baker Acedemic, 1999). 237.

# Outline of the Book of Jeremiah

## I. Jeremiah's Call 1:1-19

## II. Jeremiah's Messages to Judah 2:1-45

### A. Messages of Rebuke 2:1-24

#### 1. Jeremiah Speaks of Judah's People 2:1-19

- a. Jeremiah's Message to the Ears of Jerusalem 2:1-4:31
  - i. Accusations of Unfaithfulness 2:1-37
  - ii. Harlot Israel Called to Repentance 3:1-25
  - iii. Judgment from the North 4:1-31
- b. Jeremiah's Message about the Midst of Jerusalem 5:1-6:30
  - i. Jerusalem's Godlessness 5:1-31
  - ii. The Lord's Wrath upon Israel 6:1-30
- c. Jeremiah's Message in the Gate of the Lord's House 7:1-10:25
  - i. Accusations upon Judah 7:1-34
  - ii. Punishment for Judah 8:1-22
  - iii. Lamentation for Judah 9:1-26
  - iv. The Idol's of Judah 10:1-25
- d. Jeremiah's Message to the Cities of Judah and Jerusalem 11:1-19:15
  - i. Jeremiah's Message's Concerning Certain Judgment 11:1-17:6
    - Judah has Broken the Covenants of Old 11:1-23
    - Judah is given to their Enemy 12:1-13:27
    - Judah to Have Famine 14:1-22
    - Judah to Find no Mercy 15:1-17:6
  - ii. Jeremiah's Message's Concerning Blessing 17:7-27
  - iii. Jeremiah's Messages Concerning God's Sovereignty 18:1-19:15
    - The Potter's Wheel 18:1-23
    - The Potter's Vessel 19:1-15

#### 2. Jeremiah Speaks of Judah's Leaders 20:1-24:10

- a. Jeremiah's Message to Pashur the Priest 20:1-18
- b. Jeremiah's Message to Zedekiah the King 21:1-14
- c. Jeremiah's Message against the Kings of Judah 22:1-30
- d. Jeremiah's Message to the Pastors and Prophets 23:1-40
- e. Jeremiah's Message of Good and Bad Figs 24:1-10

### B. Messages Concerning Captivity 25:1-29:32

1. Jeremiah's Message of Seventy Years Captivity 25:1-38
2. Jeremiah's Message of Captivity Challenged 26-28
  - a. Message Challenged by Priests and Prophets 26:1-24
  - b. Message Challenged by Hananiah 27:1-28:17
    - i. The Message of Yokes Presented 27:1-22
    - ii. The Message of Yokes Challenged 28:1-17

3. Jeremiah's Message to the Captives 29:1-32
- III. Messages of Restoration 30:1-33:26**
- A. Jeremiah's Messages to the Captives of Promised Restoration 30:1-31:40
  - B. Jeremiah's Messages from Prison 32:1-32:
  - C. Jeremiah's Message by Purchasing a Field 32:33-44
  - D. Jeremiah's Message of sure Restoration 33:1-26
- IV. Messages Concerning the Fall of Jerusalem 34:1-45:5**
- A. Messages Before the Fall 34:1-38:21
    1. To Zedekiah 34:1-22
    2. To Rechabites 35:1-19
    3. Burned by Jehoiakim 36:1-32
    4. To Zedekiah 37:1-38:21
  - B. The Fall 39:1-18
  - C. The Remnants After the Fall 40:1-44:30
    1. Under Gedaliah 40:1-16
    2. Under Ishmael 41:1-18
    3. Under Johanan 42:1-44:30
      - i. Jeremiah warned not to go to Egypt 42:1-22
      - ii. Johanan refused Jeremiah's advice 43:1-13
      - iii. Jeremiah's Message in Tahpanhes 44:1-30
  - D. Message To Baruch 45:1-5
- V. Jeremiah's Message to the Gentiles 46:1-51:64**
- A. Prophecy against Egypt 46:1-28
  - B. Prophecy Against Philistia 47:1-7
  - C. Prophecy Against Moab 48:1-47
  - D. Prophecy Against Ammon 49:1-6
  - E. Prophecy Against Edom 49:7-22
  - F. Prophecy Against Damascus 49:23-27
  - G. Prophecy Against Kedar and hazor 49:28-33
  - H. Prophecy Against Elam 49:34-39
  - I. Prophecy Against Babylon 50-51:64
- VI. Jeremiah's Record of Jerusalem's Fall 52:1-34**
- A. The Timing of the Fall 52:1-6
  - B. The Record of the Fall 52:7-23
  - C. The Captives of the Fall 52:24-34

## Questions Concerning Jeremiah

1. Describe the setting for Jeremiah.
2. What function is Baruch play in relation to Jeremiah?
3. What explanation do you give concerning the difference between the LXX text and the Masoretic Text?
4. Describe the significance of 18:1-23.
5. How many years of captivity did Jeremiah prophesy and for what reason did he give that amount?
6. Describe Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah in 27-28.
7. What is the Theme of Jeremiah?
8. What did Jehoiakim do the Jeremiah's initial writing?
9. What punishments did Jeremiah endure?
10. What foreign King rescued Jeremiah?

## Bibliography

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