

First Impressions of the Prophet Jeremiah and His Message

Setting:

- Primary ministry spanning the final 5 kings of Judah centered in/around Jerusalem (627-586 BC)
- Apostate Judah invaded three times by Babylonians involving much suffering, deportations and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (605, 597, 588-586 BC)
- Significant number of remaining contingent in Judah unadvisedly flees to Egypt (584 BC)

Personal Matters:

- Jeremiah was instructed not to marry nor have children (16:2)
- He was vehemently opposed for his unpopular messages (18:18, 26:8, 38:1-6)
- He consistently found refuge through his honest dialogues with the LORD (chaps 12, 14-15, 20)

Intended Audiences:

- Jeremiah's Israelite contemporaries in Jerusalem/Judah prior to and during the Babylonian threat
- Sojourning Israelites fleeing to Egypt following final Babylonian destruction of Judah in addition to exiled Jews in Babylon
- Future generations of Jews needing hope for a brighter future
- Nations/peoples of the world in any age (including the church and our nation today)

Primary Themes:

- Judah's apostasy and the nations' arrogance as due cause for the LORD's judgment
- Dialogues and struggles of the LORD's messenger
- The discipline of the LORD through the Babylonians as the path to life
- Hope of the New Covenant under the rule of the coming ideal Davidic King

Basic Outline/Plan of Study:

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| Jun 6 | 1. The LORD's call of Jeremiah (1:1-19) / Apostate Judah (2:1-3:5) |
| Jun 13 | 2. Aspects of true repentance (3:6-4:4) / Doom from the North (4:5-6:30) |
| Jun 20 | 3. False worship (7:1-10:25) / The curse (11:1-17) |
| Jun 27 | 4. Conversations with the LORD (11:18-16:21) / Heart matters (17:1-27) |
| Jul 4 | (no class) |
| Jul 11 | 5. Lessons from pottery (18:1-20:18) / Leaders in Judah (21:1-23:40) |
| Jul 18 | 6. Embracing the LORD's discipline at the hands of the Babylonians (24:1-29:32) |
| Jul 25 | 7. Future restoration (30:1-33:26) / Present disregard for the LORD: Part 1 (34:1-35:19) |
| Aug 1 | 8. Present disregard for the LORD: Part 2 (36:1-44:30) |
| Aug 8 | 9. Baruch (45:1-5) / The nations (46:1-51:64) / Epilogue (52:1-34) |

Summary remarks of one Jeremiah commentator:

"Precisely in that Jeremiah's was a message of judgment, it was a saving message. By ruthlessly demolishing false hope, by ceaselessly asserting that the tragedy was Yahweh's doing, His righteous judgment on the nation for its sin, Jeremiah as it were drew the national disaster within the framework of faith, and thus prevented it from destroying faith. While many were being swept from their moorings, and others were plumbing the depths of despair, those who heard and received the prophetic word were given something to cling to. The tragedy could not be for them the death of God, for even in the tragedy He was in sovereign control, and unimpeachably just. Such men would be driven - through despair and beyond it - to a searching of their own hearts, to penitence, and a new commitment.

Bright, John. 1965. *Jeremiah*. (vol. 21 of Anchor Bible Commentary Series, p. CXIV). Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company

