

Jeremiah

Who, When, Where

Written by Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a young prophet in Jerusalem around the time of the Exile.

Written during the 20 years either side of 600BC. After Saul, David and Solomon the Jews were divided into two kingdoms, Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

Towards the end of 300 years of the divided kingdoms Jeremiah was raised up to bring Yahweh's message to the rebellious Israel.

Jeremiah lived in Jerusalem and seems to have stayed there after the Babylonians destroyed the city (587BC).

Summary

Yahweh was so angry with the constantly rebellious Israel that he raised up the Babylonians, (Persians, Babylon is in modern Iraq), who conquered Israel and dragged most of them off into Exile in Babylon.

But he was still their god, they were still his people. They were being disciplined, not punished.

Jeremiah was a young prophet around that time, and Yahweh chose him to receive a message about that discipline. And specifically about how long it would last.

Daniel was also a young prophet of Yahweh in Babylon around the same time. But his message was for those already taken into captivity.

Altogether the messages in this book cover a period of about 40 years of Jeremiah's ministry.

Before You Read

How long were they going to be in exile?

What should they do while they waited?

What conditions did God put on their being able to return?

How did they take the news?

How will things end up for Babylon?

What similarities and differences were there between Jeremiah and Moses?

Keep in mind that Jeremiah covers a 40 year timespan. Even by our standards God was very patient with them and gave them plenty of time to repent and to avoid destruction.

Key Verses

Jeremiah 1:5

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

God knew Jeremiah before he was formed in the womb, before he was born. And when he chooses you for a task, don't give excuses, but trust in his power to do them.

Jeremiah 2:3

*“For my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me, the spring of living waters,
and cut them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*

Why do we think our solutions to our thirsts and hungers are better than God's solutions?

Jeremiah 17:9

*The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?*

The heart is deceitful above all things.

Isn't that the truth. It's what got Israel into exile. It's what gets you into trouble too.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares Yahweh, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Who did God have plans for?

Is that a promise for you too?

Jeremiah 31:31-34

*“The time is coming,” declares Yahweh,
“when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them, “
declares Yahweh.
“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time,” declares Yahweh.
“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,”
declares Yahweh.
“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”*

A new covenant?

God's law in their inward parts

What is that about? Is that just for Israel or is this about something bigger?

Jeremiah 33:3

‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’

Call to Yahweh and he will answer you.

Even when he is disciplining his people, he wants them to call to him so he can answer.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

How would you live in exile? Would you be a rebel? Would you conform?

How long did they have to spend in exile?

How is Jeremiah like Joseph? How is Jeremiah like you?

How are you like Israel?