

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE
April 18, 2018

JEREMIAH / LAMENTATIONS

Answers to the Questions (Lesson 18)
Found on Page 93-96

The Role of the Prophet:

The word *prophet* is a combination of *pro* (in place of) and *phemi* (to speak).

In Deuteronomy 18:18 God said he would put his words into the mouth of the prophet.

The prophet was one who proclaimed the message of God (not a fortune teller).

His primary role was to bring a message of both rebuke and encouragement.

Isaiah is one book only in the sense of how it is presented in its original scrolls.

It is made up of three different authors (one was Isaiah and the others were his disciples).

The book covers different time periods which make it impossible to be one cohesive book.

Promises of God are found in . . .

Chapters 4 and 11	Isaiah prophecies about the Branch of the Lord
Chapter 7	The sign of Immanuel
Chapter 9	The birth of a child who will be a light to those in darkness
Chapter 10	A remnant will return to the Lord
Chapter 16	The establishment of David's throne
Chapters 27 and 28	The great deliverance of Israel

Chapter 53:

This chapter is quoted more in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage.

It has been referred to as the *Gospel in the Old Testament*.

Christ is revealed throughout the book of Isaiah but especially in this section.

Isaiah is a *miniature replica* of the Bible as a whole in that . . .

It is divided into two sections, the first with 39 chapters and the second with 27 (total is 66).

The first section of Isaiah shows the judgment of God and in the second the Messiah is central.

Isaiah opens the same as the Old Testament (an indictment against the people for their sins).

The first section of Isaiah closes with the prophecy of the coming of the Lord.

The second section opens with the voice of one calling in the desert.

Isaiah ends with the vision of a new heaven and a new earth.



JEREMIAH

In the book of Jeremiah there is no clear organization or development. The compilers (redactors) grouped materials based on the early and later periods of his ministry. However, they did not bother to date materials in sequence or to offer dates at all. In some instances materials belonging to the same date are widely separated from each other.

In Chapter 7 we read Jeremiah's temple sermon.
In Chapter 26 we read the response of the people to his sermon.

Chapter 1-25: This section stands out as a separate block of material. It is composed of oracles.

Chapter 26-45: This section is composed largely of biographical narratives about Jeremiah.

Chapter 26-35: Includes prophecies of judgment and hope

Chapter 30-33: Inserted is the *Little Book of Comfort or Consolation*

Chapter 36-45: Narratives dealing with the latest recorded events in his life

Chapter 46-51: This section is oracles against the nations. Some come from other writers.

Chapter 52: The story of the fall of Jerusalem (from 2 Kings 24:18-25:30) as a historical ending.

The book of Jeremiah dates his ministry from 626-586 BCE.

Noted in the book are the kings of Judah, Baruch, Ebed-melech and Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 1-10: God calls Jeremiah and he is to condemn Judah for their sins and faithlessness.

Chapter 11-28: Jeremiah warned Judah of the destruction that would come upon them.

Chapter 29-38: Jeremiah writes about the New Covenant and offers words of hope.

Chapter 39-52: Jeremiah records the events of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.

Chapter 50: God promises to rescue his nation from captivity.

Jeremiah was in the public arena during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. His ministry was over the time period of 626 to 587 BCE.

Jehoiakim revived the paganism that his father (Josiah) had tried to eliminate.

The people were turning enthusiastically to their former ways.

For Jeremiah faithfulness within the covenant relationship was fundamental.

According to Chapter 26, his sermon created an uproar.

Jeremiah prophesied doom and the rebuilding would come only after the destruction.

Jeremiah saw God at work in human history.

In Chapter 18 Jeremiah compared Israel to clay in the divine hands of the potter.

If the vessel was spoiled then it could be reworked into another vessel as the potter saw fit.

The threatened catastrophe came as a result of human disobedience.

Jeremiah made it clear that God did not show arbitrary and impulsive wrath.

The imminent tragedy would be the consequence of the actions of the people.

During the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah saw the judgment of God taking shape in international developments. At the time of his call he spoke of some foe from the north. Later the northern foe became identified with Babylon.

Scattered throughout Chapters 1-18 are a number of prophetic oracles written about the advance of Babylon. Jeremiah weeps over the fate of Jerusalem. These chapters read as if all the suffering of the people of Israel flowed through the heart of Jeremiah. No other prophet of the Old Testament period more personally identified with the people or felt more keenly the great agony of what would befall them.

609 BCE Death of Josiah at Megiddo (Recorded in 1 Esdras)

Jeremiah's Temple Sermon (Chapters 7 and 26)

605 BCE The Battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46)

The Burning of Jeremiah's Scroll (Jeremiah 36)

The words of Jeremiah of impending doom were accompanied by signs (between him and God).

Chapter 13 The Linen Loincloth

Symbol of the Wine Jars

Chapter 18 The Potter and the Clay

Chapter 19 The Broken Earthenware Jug

Chapter 24 The Good and Bad Fig

The Cup of God's Wrath

Chapter 27 The Sign of the Yoke

Hunted as a public enemy and traitor to the king, Jeremiah entered into a time of silence.

From this time period came a series of lyrics known as the *Confessions of Jeremiah* (12-20).

The term *confession* in this sense is reminiscent of the *individual lament* found in the Psalms.

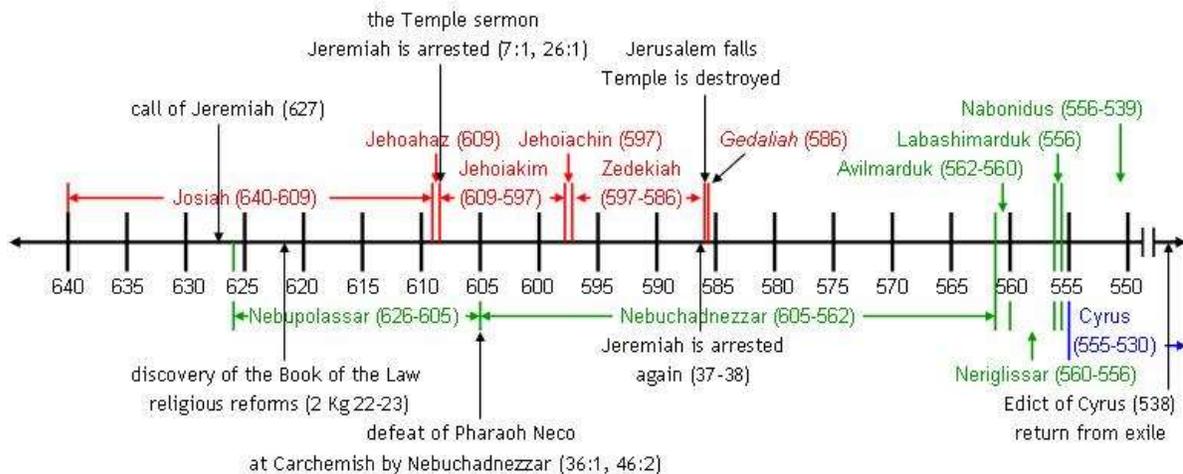
Shy and sensitive in nature, Jeremiah recoiled from the tremendous task given to him.

He became a man of strife and contention to the whole land.

He was constantly surrounded by enemies and sat alone.

Even marriage and children were denied him.

His isolation was a sign of the impending catastrophe that would disrupt all families.



Contrary to the popular prophets who promised a quick return to the homeland, Jeremiah told the exiles to count on staying in the foreign land for a long time – until seventy years had passed in Babylon. Jeremiah saw the hope of Israel in those who were displaced (the remnant).

Baruch (a scribe of Jeremiah and a book of the Apocrypha) offers us accounts of the clash between Jeremiah and the other prophets who were loyal to the regime.

Chapter 37: During the siege of Jerusalem Jeremiah never wavered in his conviction that the early course of action was to surrender to Babylonia. The current king, Zedekiah, was hopeful that the Lord would perform a miracle and make Nebuchadnezzar withdraw but he received no comfort from Jeremiah. Hoping to gain the favor of the Lord the king tried to reinstate one of the laws that had been ignored (the prohibition against enslaving a Hebrew). According to Baruch, Zedekiah asked for the release of all Hebrew slaves. Once the situation improved the slaves were taken back which was final proof to Jeremiah that they would suffer judgment from God.

Chapter 42: The word of the Lord was about judgment and renewal. Jeremiah understood that the false foundations had to be swept clean. Room had to be made for God to build and plant anew.

- He spoke of a new covenant within a new community.
- It would rest upon the initiative and authority of the Lord.
- It would not be like the covenant that was handed over to Moses.
- It would fulfill the original intention of the Sinai covenant.
- The new covenant would rest upon divine forgiveness.
- It brought an anticipation of a new age (the future upon which Israel hoped).



The book of Lamentations is a collection of poetic laments about the destruction of Jerusalem. In the Hebrew canon it appears in the Ketuvim (Writings). The original name of the book in Hebrew (ekah) is translated *Alas* or *How*. The prophet Jeremiah is the traditional author although that is now disputed. However, the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BCE is the background to the poems.

- The book is a traditional lament over the city.
- The book mourns the desertion by God and is likened to a funeral chant.
- The bereaved bewails and addresses the dead.
- The tone is bleak and God does not speak.
- The suffering is seen as undeserved and any hope for future redemption is minimal.

Lamentations is recited on the fast day of Tisha B'Av (the Ninth of Av). On that day the Jewish community mourns the destruction of both the first and second Temple. Christians use portions of the book on Good Friday at the Tenebrae Service. Like the book of Job, Lamentations puzzles over the results of evil and suffering in the world. Job dealt with unexplained evil while in this lament the tragedy was entirely of their making. At the heart of this book sits a few verses devoted to the hope in the Lord (3:22-25). It is a statement of faith in the midst of surrounding darkness.

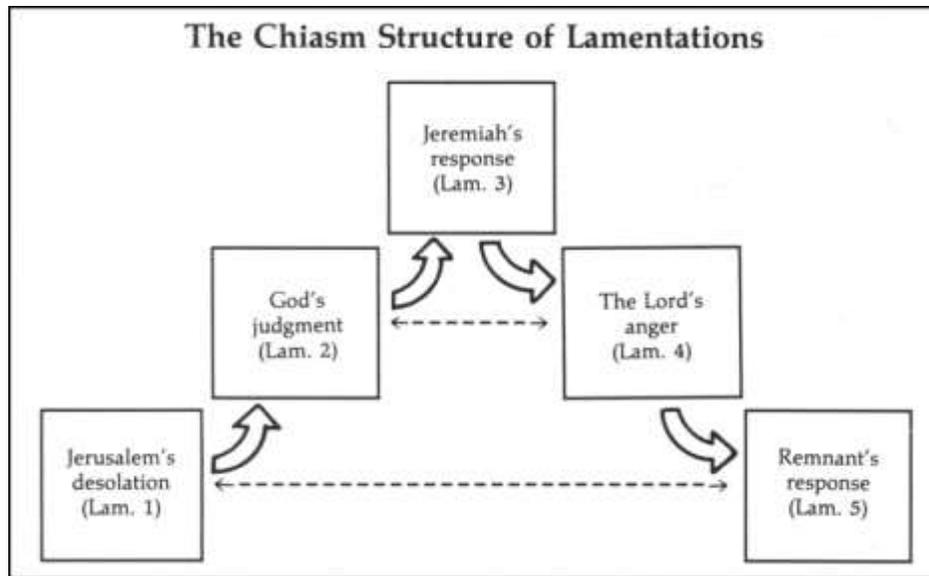
We have to wonder how many different ways a person can describe the desolation.

- Children begged for food from their mothers.
- Young men and woman were cut down by swords.
- Even the roads of the city mourned over its condition.

The author pictured himself captured in a besieged city.

- There was no one to hear his prayers and he became a target for the enemy.
- Yet even in this seemingly hopeless situation, he somehow found hope in the Lord.

- Chapter 1: The author mourns for Jerusalem as it lays in ruin.
- Chapter 2: The author describes the anger of the Lord who brought judgment to the land.
- Chapter 3: The author is also afflicted and expressed his troubled spirit and suffering gloom.
- Chapter 4: God brought justice and ruled mightily. The nation was warned about their sin.



Common Lectionary Readings

Christ the King Sunday Jeremiah 23:1-6
 Easter Jeremiah 31:1-6
 Christmas Eve Jeremiah 31:7-14

Holy Saturday Lamentations 3:1-24
 July 1, 2018 Lamentations 3:22-33 (Could substitute for Psalm 30 or 130)

Assignment for April 25

Complete the Exercises on Pages 99-102
 Read Ezekiel (or the portions outlined on Page 102)