

JEREMIAH

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The life and times during Jeremiah

The material recorded in Jeremiah covers a long period of time. It shows, demonstrates the attitude of the Jewish people to the true God.

Following the reign of Solomon the Jewish nation split into two, the Southern Kingdom, Judea, and the Northern Kingdom, each under their own king.

Jeremiah comes on to the scene about 100 years after Isaiah. He was the son of Hilkiah, born into a family of priests at Anathoth in Benjamin territory, this was a town set aside for the priests. It is located just over 2 miles northeast of Jerusalem, today it is called Anata. He was born during the reign of King Manasseh, a most evil man and king of Judah, idolatry was everywhere, children were even being sacrificed to these idols, the Laws given through Moses were totally ignored.

[2 Kings 21:1-18.](#)

King Josiah was quite young when he came to be the king, but he sought the Lord and began to clear the country of idolatry and then instructed the priests to repair and cleanse the temple. It was during this repair work, that Hilkiah the priest, found the book of the Law, it was read to the king. The king was deeply moved and instructed the people to turn back to the Lord, to repent.

[2 Kings 22:1ff.](#)

Unfortunately, most people only change outwardly, their hearts were still evil and against the Lord. This really showed when Josiah died, the people very rapidly returned to idolatry.

Jeremiah is called by God to be His mouthpiece and prophet, instead of following into the more peaceful life as a priest.

For Jeremiah to serve as a prophet he threw away a peaceful but probably a very boring life. Priest's had set tasks each day, the sacrifices to offer, lepers to examine, official tasks and teaching of the law and protecting and cleaning the temple.

The priests task was mainly to preserve the past by ensuring the continuation of the worship through the sanctuary, but Jeremiah's message was to make the present worship from the peoples heart and so prevent a sad future for the people. However, the sacrifices offered by the priests could never change the peoples hearts,

see [Hebrews 10:1-18](#)

Jeremiah's call was divine, however, initially he questioned the call of God, for preaching to these hard-hearted people was an unthankful task which he felt unable to do.

Jeremiah brought the messages of God for 40 years through Judah's final five kings, his message warned of a coming punishment by God, for the people to turn back to God to prevent this happening, but the messages were ignored by the people. Following the death of the Godly King Josiah, religious and political life became very bad.

Babylon, to the North, Egypt to the South were very powerful nations and were struggling to take over the area. Babylon finally became the controlling nation. It was Babylon which was to become the instrument used by God to punish His godless people.

In 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar attacked and broke into Jerusalem, the city was destroyed and the people taken off as captives into exile.

Jeremiah began his ministry during the thirteenth year of the reign of king Josiah, in 626 B.C. This ministry continued into the early years of the Exile, probably a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Following a short reign by Jehoahaz, who was taken off into exile in Egypt, Jehoiakim was made king, he was a strong ruler, he reigned for eleven years, but was evil, often trying to silence Jeremiah's message,

See [Jeremiah 1:1-3;](#)

[2 Kings 23:30-34;](#)

[2 Chronicles 36:1-4;](#)

[Jeremiah 22:10-12.](#)

Nebuchadnezzar again sieged Jerusalem in 587 B.C., the occupying Jews were taken off to Babylon and Jeremiah was forced to flee to Egypt where he later died.

The following table shows the various messages given to Jeremiah.

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The Prophet is called

[Jeremiah 1:1-19](#).

Verse 1-3: Jeremiah sets the scene, who and what was the state of the country.

Verses 4,5: Jeremiah frequently used the words *"the word of the LORD came unto me,"* showing that his message was of a divine source. God reveals that He knew Jeremiah before he was conceived, and had been set aside for God's personal use before he was born, showing that time does not exist for God.

Verse 6-10: Jeremiah, had a timid nature, on receiving the call, he felt unable to take up such a position, *"I cannot speak: for I am a child."* Isaiah also felt unable to be the mouthpiece for God when he was called, [Isaiah 6:5](#).

God however, has the power to do anything, *"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."* God touches the mouth of Jeremiah, to give him the necessary power to speak the message, to destroy and build the kingdoms of the Jews at the time.

The messages given to Jeremiah still apply today for the world.

The vision of the Almond Tree.

Verses 11,12: In the area known by Jeremiah, the almond tree normally blossoms in January, and by doing so shows that winter is over and spring is about to come. The original Hebrew has a play on words, almond tree is "saqed" while the Hebrew word for "watch" or "wake up" is "soqed". God is telling Jeremiah that He is awake and watching over all His Words and He will fulfill them. God had not forgotten His covenant with the Jewish nation, even though they had turned against Him.

See [Leviticus 26:1ff](#);

[Deuteronomy 28:1ff](#);

[2 Kings 17:13-15](#).

The vision of the Boiling Pot.

Verses 13-16: The people of God had rejected Him so He gives this vision to show that He controls all nations of the world and will use them to fulfill His plans. God had prepared Babylon, to the North, to carry out His punishment on His people. At the time Assyria was the controlling and dominant nation, not Babylon. Assyria and Egypt were to be defeated by Babylon later, just as God planned.

"Idolatry" was singled out by God, verse 16, the people preferred to worship gods made with their own hands, outwardly worshipping the True God, but they were also very hypocritical because though they still kept the temple worship they had also brought their idols into the temple.

Compare [Jeremiah 5:12-13](#);

[Jeremiah 8:11-12](#),

[Jeremiah 14:13-22](#).

Verse 17-19: God repeated His message to Jeremiah, "for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee." *Jeremiah was to become "like an iron pillar, a defended city, against the kings and princes of Judah, a metal wall."*

Jeremiah accepts the task set by God and as a result was to become the most hated prophet in Jewish history. By human standards Jeremiah was a failure, the people ignored the message and suffered the consequence but he fulfilled the will of God and so was a great success. Compare the words of Jesus in, [Matthew 16:24,26](#).

"24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Questions to think about.

Would you be willing to give up a peaceful life for God?

Would you feel you are not able to preach for God?

What was God's answer to this.

Has God ever shown you a sign of His power as He did to Jeremiah?