

JEREMIAH

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Events and truths.

[Jeremiah 34-39](#)

Jeremiah had faithfully given the messages given to him by the patient and long suffering God, but the kingdom of Judah was about to die. The Jews had been given many years of blessing from God under Moses, Joshua and David, they even had a wonderful temple to remind them of these blessings and were able to worship this true God. Yet now this was all ended, Judah was in the hands of the Babylonians. Why had this happened? The people, especially the leaders did not believe in the true God, and turned away from His help, from His Word, preferring to get help from Egypt and the surrounding nations. The following chapters recorded the final events leading up to this sad day.

The Word of God is dishonoured.

[Jeremiah 34:1 to 35:19.](#)

Nebuchadnezzar's army is rapidly advancing across Judah, Jerusalem is now under attack.

[Jeremiah 34:1-7.](#) Jeremiah brings king Zedekiah a message from God, to give the king a further chance to turn back to Him, to save the people and the temple from the coming destruction. The message tells the king that all of his family and the government officials were about to be taken to Babylon as judgement for their evil. Zedekiah could turn back to God, save the people and the city but the king was afraid of his counsellors.

The evil of the people.

[Jeremiah 34:8-22.](#)

Zedekiah and the people make a covenant with God in the temple, to free all the slaves, they even made a sacrifice of a calf, walking between the halves as a sign of the covenant, as given to Moses,

See [Genesis 15:17.](#)

According to this law, a Jew, who has slaves, must release them and give them their freedom after seven years of service.

[Exodus 21:1-11;](#)

[Deuteronomy 15:12-18.](#)

Unfortunately the Jews had not obeyed this law for years but felt their action this time might get rid of the armies. This could not be the effect, for God had already judged and was now carrying out the punishment, their exile to Babylon.

This promise by the people to release the slaves, as in the covenant, did not last long, following an easing of the siege. Nebuchadnezzar had moved away to deal with the Egyptians,

[Jeremiah 34:21-22;](#)

[Jeremiah 37:5-11,](#)

The slaves masters forced the slaves back into slavery.

[Jeremiah 34:12-22.](#)

Jeremiah, as a result of this action now preaches a sermon on the evil attitude of the people to the Lord, they had once been slaves in Egypt and should have known what it was like to be a slave, yet they were now breaking the laws on releasing slaves.

God was now preparing a terrible death for all who had taken part in the broken covenant.

The Rechabites,

[Jeremiah 35:1-19.](#)

Jeremiah now records an event which happened eighteen years previously, the people of the Rechabites honoured God which contrasts with the behaviour of the people of Judah.

See also [2 Kings 10:15-23;](#)

[Judges 1:16;](#)

[Judges 4:11](#),

The Rechabites were a small tribe of nomads related to the father-in-law of Moses.

This tribe had made a commitment not to drink any alcohol, as a promise to their father, the father-in-law of Moses, God uses this event to show that they had kept a reverence for the command of their tribes father for over 200 years, why could not the people of Judah and Israel honour the Words of the God of the universe?

The Word of God is recorded.

[Jeremiah 36:1-32](#).

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, God command Jeremiah to make a record of all He had spoken to him. God then guides Jeremiah to dictate to Baruch the son of Neriah all the Words of God.

Jeremiah was not allowed into the temple so the scrolls are then taken into the temple by Baruch to be read to the people. The scroll was read out three times to different people, the people, Micaiah and the princes, finally king Jehoiakim. We are not told of the peoples reaction, however, the princes were scared, but the action of the king was to use the Word of God as "fuel for the fire," trying to destroy the Word of God, but God's Word can never be destroyed,

see [Matthew 24:25](#).

God then pronounces judgement on the kings action and tells Jeremiah to write another scroll.

If only the people and leaders had responded to these words, it would have saved the nation.

A new king, same reaction.

[Jeremiah 37:1 to 38:28](#)

King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, yet still they rejected the Word of God.

However, the king sent Jehucal to Jeremiah to ask for prayer, but Jehucal was not a friend of Jeremiah and later tried to persuade the king to kill Jeremiah,

[Jeremiah 38:1,4](#).

God had already told Jeremiah not to pray for the people but the departure of Nebuchadnezzar to deal with the Egyptians at first seemed that the prayer was not needed.

Events for those left behind.

[Jeremiah 40-45](#)

The Babylonian armies leave and as peace settles across the area the Jews who had fled out of the country now started to return. The governor, Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, encourages the people to serve the Chaldeans, just as Jeremiah had been warning that the people must do, it was the will of God for them.

Jeremiah returns to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon had made governor. If the people had followed the prophet and the new governor then they would have been safe and reasonably comfortable, but this was not to be so, they had not seen the punishment made by God for their failures, their hearts soon turned back to the old ways.

Jeremiah would be continuing his preaching and warnings from God.

A Traitor.

[Jeremiah 40:7 – 41:18](#)

The various leaders and officers left now accept the new governor and submit to his control, however there is a traitor at work, Johanan the son of Kareah came to Gedaliah and asks, "do you, know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to kill you?" Unfortunately Gedaliah does not listen to the warning, later he will regret it.

Ishmael was a descendant of David,

[Jeremiah 41:1](#);

[2 Samuel 5:13-16](#)

And may have felt that he should have been the governor, was it pride and ambition? In addition he was obeying instruction from Baalis the king of the Ammonites, so a money payment may have also been involved in the arrangement.

It is a sign of friendship when people eat together in the Middle East, but Ishmael used it as a trap and murdered Gedaliah and his men. A little later he wept on meeting a group of eighty Jewish pilgrims who had come to worship, but then also murdered seventy of them, only spared the other ten to get their hidden food. He was a very evil man who would stop at nothing to achieve his desires.

His final act was to kidnap many of the Jewish remnant and started to take them to the land of the Ammonites. But Johanan comes to their rescue, releases them from Ishmael who somehow escapes.

Johanan has no faith in God and now wants to take this remnant to Egypt, contrary to the message from God through Jeremiah.

Johanan, a poor insincere leader.

[Jeremiah 42:1-43:13](#)

Johanan is scared to do what is right, he will not trust the Lord and remain in Judah. He now feared the Babylonians and what they will do when they hear of Ishmael's acts.

Johanan approaches Jeremiah and asks for him to pray to the Lord, it sounded a sincere request but later it becomes obvious that they had already made up their minds to go to Egypt.

After a ten day gap God responds, possibly to give them time to think. Jeremiah brings the answer:-

1) **A promise**, to stay in the land and God will look after them, supplying all they need and give full protection. Eventually God will build them up as a nation.

2) **A warning**, if you go to Egypt, you will not have peace, the dangers and terror that they were trying to avoid would follow them into Egypt, the judgements already made by God against Judea would happen to them in Egypt. God knew that Nebuchadnezzar would soon attack Egypt.

3) **God knows their hearts**, that they were insincere in asking for guidance, they just wanted God to agree to their plans.

A rebellion is full of pride [Jeremiah 43:1 - 7](#)

The people are still sure that they are right and God is wrong. Johanan and others tell Jeremiah that he is a liar and not God's messenger, a false prophet.

[Jeremiah 43:7](#)

So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: *"thus came they even to Tahpanhes."*

The final "action Sermon"

[Jeremiah 43:8 – 12](#)

Jeremiah now gives his last example sermon. Taking some larger stones, he sets them in clay in front of the house of Pharaoh in Tahpanhes. He then tells the people that Nebuchadnezzar will one day sit on those stones to pass judgement just as happened to Jerusalem, the gods and temples of Egypt will be destroyed, as easily as a shepherd puts on his cloak.

The Idolaters are doomed.

[Jeremiah 44:1 – 30](#)

This is Jeremiah's last message to his people that is recorded. It took place in Egypt at the end of about 46 years as a messenger of God. What a show of faith in God and obedience to Him.

Verses 1-14: Soon after the Jews arrived in Egypt they started to worship the Egyptian gods. Jeremiah again reminds them of what had happened before due to God's judgement on their worship of idols and not Him. He reminded them of all the messages sent by God as warnings. *"Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!"* Yet still they did not learn.

As a result God responds with *"Behold, I will set My face against you,"* He then announces that those who had gone into Egypt would be destroyed, they will not be allowed back to Judah. The future for the Jews rests with those in Babylon.

Verses 15-36: The people's response does not make sense, *"When we worshipped idols and other gods we had all we needed, were OK, since we stopped we have had problems."* It appears that the women were the leaders away from God, practicing the worship of idols, and the men approved.

The Lord has to again make judgement on the people, Jeremiah brings the message *"all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them."*

Jeremiah gives them a sign, the king of Egypt is about to be given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. History shows this happened a few years later, it is possible Jeremiah may have died by then.

Jeremiah 45:1-5

This chapter probably belongs to Chapter 36 but acts as an introduction to Chapters 46 to 51, the prophecies given by Jeremiah and written down by Baruch, his faithful helper.