



INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah, who served as both a priest and a prophet, was the son of a priest named Hilkiah (not the High-Priest of 2Ki 22:8 who discovered the book of the law).

- He was from the small village of Anathoth (1:1), today called Anata, about 3 mi. NE of Jerusalem part of Benjamin's tribal allotment.
- Jeremiah was probably about 20 years old when God called him into prophetic ministry
- He started when Josiah was King of Judah and ended after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC... around 50 years

Jeremiah's ministry covers 2 Kings 22-25 and 2 Chronicles 34-36

- At the time, the spiritual condition of Judah was given over to idolatry
- Going back to King Ahaz, before Hezekiah and long before Jeremiah
- During Isaiah's ministry, King Ahaz set up a system of sacrificing children to the god Molech in the Valley of Hinnom (735-715)
- In Jesus' day this valley was referred to as Gehenna
- After King Ahaz, his son Hezekiah became King and led reforms to clean up idolatry
- But after King Hezekiah, his son Manasseh continued to foster child sacrifice along with other forms of idolatry including the queen of heaven and this continued to Jeremiah's time beginning with King Josiah
- King Josiah was 8 years old when he was crowned as King and he reigned for 31 years
- He sought to remove all forms of idolatry and tore down the high places
- But it wasn't enough... the hearts of the people were unchanged by the reforms and eventually idolatry crept back in

Because Judah worshipped idols, God said judgment would come

- This judgment came in December 598 when Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem and in March 597 Jerusalem surrendered
- Nebuchadnezzar replaced the current king of Judah with Zedekiah
- Zedekiah was a weak leader and under his leadership Judah collapsed
- In 588, a new Pharaoh comes into power in Egypt
- Judah decides to join with Tyre and Ammon to overthrow Babylon
- Nebuchadnezzar acts swift and harsh, conquers Jerusalem and destroys the city, including the temple



Although Jeremiah is a book that chronicles the dismantling of a nation, the tone of the book is not one of anger, but tears

- Jeremiah is referred to by J Vernon McGee as God's crybaby
- He ministered with tear filled eyes, a broken heart and a trembling voice
- He was forbidden to marry because of the times in which he lived
- He never made a convert, never led anyone to repent
- He was rejected by his people, hated, beaten, put in stocks, imprisoned and charged with being a traitor
- The message God gave Him to deliver broke His heart
- He wanted to resign, but God wouldn't let him
- After the Babylonians captured Judah and took them into captivity, Jeremiah was allowed to stay
- When the remnant wanted to flee to Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied against it, but he was forced to go with the remnant to Egypt and it's believed that he was stoned by the remnant in Egypt where he died

So we begin with the call of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:4–10 (NKJV)

1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." ⁶ Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth." ⁷ But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of their faces, For I *am* with you to deliver you," says the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

Jeremiah's call was to root out, pull down, destroy, throw down, build and plant

- Could you imagine being called to that ministry?
- God, I want to serve you... awesome, here's what I want you to do
- I've called you to preach destruction to a nation
- Sometimes the system becomes so corrupt there's nothing to build on
- Now, God's purpose is always to build, but He can't always start out building... sometimes He has to tear down what is there
- Israel was at the place where it was beyond recovery



- It was necessary for God to pull down, root out, tear down and destroy what was left in order to start His new work of planting and building
- So it is in our lives... God never tears down in our lives unless He intends to replant and rebuild that new work in us
- You might say... Lord, You're really bringing me to nothing
- God says... that's right, that I might begin a new work in your life
- God doesn't work through the old systems, the old wine skins
- He seems to work outside the old system to bring an entirely fresh and new work

Jeremiah 1:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

The almond tree is the first tree that blooms in the New Year

- In fact, almond trees begin to blossom in January and by March they have almonds on the
- So the Hebrews refer to the Almond Tree as the Awakening Tree
- So the Lord asks Jeremiah what do you see and Jeremiah says I see the awakening tree (the soqed) and the Lord says that's right...
- I am ready (soqed) or awake to perform my Word... It's a play on words

Jeremiah 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north."

- Now Babylon is actually East of Israel, but in order to attack they had to come down from the North, so this is a reference to the coming invasion from Babylon
- (Vs. 15-16) The reason they are being invaded is because of the wickedness of the people, because they rejected God and turned to idols

Archaeology has confirmed this

- Around the city of Jerusalem is an area known as The City of David
- It's located below the Temple Mount area on a hill known as the Hill of Ophel and above the pool of Siloam and the Gihon Springs



- When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, rather than rebuild the houses they covered over them with dirt and built on top of them
- As archaeologists dug down, they discovered the rubble of the houses during the time of Jeremiah
- What they discovered were tons of little idols that the people made
- A confirmation of vs. 16 that said they were worshipping the works of their own hands

So God tells Jeremiah in vs. 17...

Jeremiah 1:17–19 (NKJV)

¹⁷ “Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them. ¹⁸ For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land— Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I *am* with you,” says the LORD, “to deliver you.”

In the KJV God says gird up your loins or prepare to go to work

- The guys wore long skirts which were fine for walking around, but if you had to do any work you had to pull them up and synch them in your belt or sash so you could move your legs
- So whenever you read gird your loins, it’s basically saying get to work
- And here’s the job... speak everything that I tell you to speak, don’t be afraid, don’t even look at them because they’re going to fight against you
- When they fight against you, don’t worry because they won’t win because I am with you to deliver you...
- Now have a great Sabbath Jeremiah

If you are truly doing the ministry, you are going to offend people and when you offend them they will fight against you

- I’m amazed at how many people fight against the Word of God
- They would rather worship a god of their own making, that fits their understanding of God, their beliefs, their seminary degrees, their upbringing, their religious tradition...
- Rather than worship the God of the Bible who is full of mercy and grace
- And it’s easy to get discouraged by all the fighting
- But as the Lord said to Jeremiah, don’t worry... I will put a wall around you and I will be your defense.



- When you see God's hand upon you and God's defense around you and His work... it's such an encouragement to see God vindicate His Word

Jeremiah 2:1–2 (NKJV)

2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown.

- Now this is the first message that God calls Jeremiah to deliver
- God is calling His people back to their first love, just as Jesus called the church at Ephesus back to their first love

Jeremiah 2:3–5 (NKJV)

³ Israel was holiness to the LORD, The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them,” says the LORD.’ ”

⁴ Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the LORD: “What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters?

You were exclusively for Me... what did I do to drive you away?

- Jesus said that to the church in Ephesus.. I remember the love, the devotion, the commitment you used to have
- What did I do? How did I offend you? Why is your heart turned away?
- (Vs. 6-8) We see that even the priests became corrupt
- They turned away from the Lord and turned to idols
- Imagine being under their teaching ministry?
- They are teaching the law and they don't even know the Lord!

Jeremiah 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ “Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,” says the LORD, “And against your children's children I will bring charges.

God is now making His case to Judah based on the Covenant He made with Israel and He lays two charges against them

Jeremiah 2:13 (NKJV)



¹³ “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *And* hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

- First, they have forsaken God, who is the fountain of living water, the spring from which life comes
- And in God’s place, they have built water cisterns that are cracked and don’t hold water
- Where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, there was a community of Essenes... John the Baptist was an Essene
- They were able to live in a dry, barren area by building huge cisterns
- When the rain would fall on the highlands, it would drain into these cisterns that were carved out of limestone
- But cisterns were not a source of water, they were a reservoir
- So at best, a cistern could only hold water but God says your cisterns are broken and not only that, but you rejected a water source
- That’s the difference between religion and relationship with God
- Religion is a broken cistern, relationship with God is a source of life
- And God says by rejecting me you’ve brought this on yourself

Jeremiah 2:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Have you not brought this on yourself, In that you have forsaken the LORD your God When He led you in the way?

- One of the things that I notice as I’m counseling people is how often we bring crisis on ourselves
- If we’d only live life God’s way, life would work... but we think we have a better way and so we do it our way and bring problems on ourselves
- (Vs. 18) Israel was looking to their alliance with Egypt and Assyria to protect them from Babylon
- But both Egypt and Assyria fell to the Babylonians
- So they turned to the idols and in doing so committed spiritual adultery

God says... even though you look good on the outside, you’re stained

Jeremiah 2:22 (NKJV)

²² For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, *Yet* your iniquity is marked before Me,” says the Lord GOD.



- God says they're like a wild donkey in heat, sniffing in the wind
- They only come around when they need help

But God responds by saying...

Jeremiah 2:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ But where *are* your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, If they can save you in the time of your trouble; For *according to* the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah. ²⁹ “Why will you plead with Me? You all have transgressed against Me,” says the LORD.

- You only come around when you need something... it sounds like a lot of people today
- Then they justify their way of life

Jeremiah 2:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ Yet you say, ‘Because I am innocent, Surely His anger shall turn from me.’ Behold, I will plead My case against you, Because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’

- Listen, it's not wrong. It doesn't matter. God doesn't care.
- How could it be wrong... we love each other!
- God calls them shameless!

Jeremiah 3:1 (NKJV)

3 “They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me,” says the LORD.

But here's what's amazing! God says return and I will take you back!

Jeremiah 3:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I *am* merciful,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not remain angry forever. ¹³ Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD.

Confession is to agree with God, to say what God says



- 1 John 1:9 says if we confess our sins, then He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
- When you are justifying yourself, God can't do anything with you
- When you turn your sin into an issue, God can't forgive you
- I have an anger issue or a drug addiction... God can't deliver you
- God can only forgive you and cleanse you of sin
- God already knows, so confess what He already knows

Jeremiah 3:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

¹⁶ “Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days,” says the LORD, “that they will say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit *it*, nor shall it be made anymore.

¹⁷ “At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

- This, of course, is talking about the glorious Kingdom Age when Jesus is ruling and reigning over the earth from Jerusalem
- The focus will not be on the Ark of the Covenant, the focus will be on the New Covenant, Jesus Christ dwelling in the midst of Israel
- During that time Israel's relationship with the Lord will be restored
- Now Jeremiah uses various metaphors as pictures of Judah's relationship with God

(Vs. 1-3) Jeremiah uses the metaphor of the Unplowed Field

Jeremiah 4:3 (NKJV)

³ For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: “Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

- Jesus used the metaphor of the thorns as the cares of the world that choke out the seed in the Parable of the Sower and the Seed
- Jeremiah says, break up the hard ground of your heart so good seed can be planted... don't keep sowing seed in the things of the world



Jeremiah 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench *it*, Because of the evil of your doings.”

- In Romans, Paul talks about the circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the law... it's work of the Spirit
- That's why you can't force people to act Christ like until the Lord does a work in their hearts
- I can't force people to be loving, merciful, gracious... it has to be a work of the Spirit otherwise it's legalism... looks good on the outside, stinks inside

Because Israel rejected God, an invasion from Babylon is imminent

Jeremiah 4:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say: “Blow the trumpet in the land; Cry, ‘Gather together,’ And say, ‘Assemble yourselves, And let us go into the fortified cities.’ ⁶ Set up the standard toward Zion. Take refuge! Do not delay! For I will bring disaster from the north, And great destruction.”

- The Lord sends Jeremiah to warn the people and to give them one last opportunity to return to the Lord
- But the other prophets were saying, Jeremiah is crazy

Jeremiah 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, ‘You shall have peace,’ Whereas the sword reaches to the heart.”

- So Jeremiah tells the people, listen these guys are deceiving you
- Judgment is coming and it's coming fast
- If you turn to the Lord, you will be saved but Judah ignores the Lord's warnings so the Lord says you're bringing this on yourself

Jeremiah 4:18 (NKJV)



¹⁸ “Your ways and your doings Have procured these *things* for you. This is your wickedness, Because it is bitter, Because it reaches to your heart.”

(Vs. 19-31) The Lord speaks and His heart is filled with sorrow

Jeremiah 4:27–30 (NKJV)

²⁷ For thus says the LORD: “The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end. ²⁸ For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it. ²⁹ The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen. They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks. Every city *shall be* forsaken, And not a man shall dwell in it. ³⁰ “And *when you are* plundered, What will you do? Though you clothe yourself with crimson, Though you adorn *yourself* with ornaments of gold, Though you enlarge your eyes with paint, In vain you will make yourself fair; *Your* lovers will despise you; They will seek your life.

- God, the Father, watching His children... His foolish, silly children make decisions that put them in the path of destruction
- I've seen young kids addicted to heroin, meth at our home
- You look at them and think... there goes someone's little boy or girl
- God goes all the way back to creation... I remember when I made you
- We see His Father's heart come out... what will you do when you're plundered? What will you do when you're rejected?
- What will you do when your lovers try to kill you... these false gods in your life... what will you do when you say... woe is me

Now God doesn't want to judge Israel

Jeremiah 5:1 (NKJV)

5 “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places If you can find a man, If there is *anyone* who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her.

- He says, if I could just find 1 person... I would save them all
- But He couldn't and so judgment came but God had mercy

Jeremiah 5:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “Nevertheless in those days,” says the LORD, “I will not make a complete end of you.



- God looked over the face of the earth to find 1 person so God could pardon mankind... but He could find none
- So God Himself became a man, He became the 1 person who would save them all
- Now God wants us to live a full and abundant life
- But their continued rebellion against God keeps them from experiencing God's blessing

Jeremiah 5:23–25 (NKJV)

²³ But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; They have revolted and departed. ²⁴ They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest." ²⁵ Your iniquities have turned these *things* away, And your sins have withheld good from you.

God's nature is love without cause... He loves you good or bad

- Because God loves you, He wants to bless you, do good things for you
- But sin causes the good things that God wants to do to be withheld
- For the believer, sin quenches the work of the Spirit
- Why? Because sin is born out of unbelief and the Spirit works in an atmosphere of faith
- While the representatives of God in Judah should have been pointing the people back to God... they themselves were corrupt
- So we read this final verse in Jeremiah 5

Jeremiah 5:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ "An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: ³¹ The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their *own* power; And My people love *to have it* so. But what will you do in the end?"

There was corruption, but the people like it that way

- I see that as the condition of our nation... we see corruption, but the people like it that way
- The preachers are ruling out of their own power, their own wealth... and the people like it that way
- The prophets are telling them, it's all good... and the people like it that way



- God says it's horrible and He asks the question... but what will you do when the end comes? Good question