

THE BOOKS OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

Jeremiah

Jeremiah lived in a time very much like our day. Isaiah had told Judah in his prophecy that judgement was coming unless they turned to God. Jeremiah's message was to notify the people of Judah that their judgement was now at hand and that nothing could save them from punishment.

Jeremiah is known as "the weeping prophet" and "the prophet of a broken heart" (9:1 and 13:17).

The historical setting of Jeremiah's time is found in II Kings 22-25.

Who He Was

Jeremiah is partly autobiographical since he gave us so much of his personal history:

1. Born a priest (1:1).
2. Chosen to be a prophet before he was born (1:5).
3. Called to the prophetic office (1:5,6).
4. Forbidden to marry because of the terrible times (16:1-4).
5. Rejected by his people (11:18-21); hated and beaten (20:1-3); imprisoned (35:11-16).
6. Wanted to resign but couldn't (20:9).

The Central Message

"Thou shalt go - I have set thee over nations and kingdoms to root out, to pull down, to destroy - to build and to plant" (1:7,10) or (26:12-13).

If men accept God's Word it will give life; if they reject it, it will bring condemnation (John 3:36).

The Structure of the Book

The Book of Jeremiah does not follow a topical or chronological order. In reading we should be more concerned with the matters that he deals with rather than a time element except as it is definitely stated.

1. The Prophet's Call - Chapter 1.
2. Sermon delivered before the fall of Judah - Chapters 2-38.
3. The fall of Jerusalem and Judah - Chapter 39.
4. Messages to the Jewish Remnant - Chapters 40-44.
5. Prophecies against the Gentile Nations - Chapters 45-51.
6. Looking back to the Fall of Judah - Chapter 51.

Chapters 1-39 are all before the fall of Jerusalem. Chapters 21-39 are specific and they do give a time of their delivery in the first words of each Chapter. Chapter 39 gives the fall of Jerusalem to Babylonia. Chapters 40-44 contain the prophecies on the nine Gentile nations.

Messianic Prophecies in Jeremiah

1. The ministry of Jeremiah includes some wonderful prophecies concerning Christ and the future: **Jeremiah 23:3-6**. Compare "Branch", "A King", "The Lord our Righteousness" to **Luke 1:30-33**. All the Names in Jeremiah point to Christ.
2. In **Jeremiah 30:1-10** we find some "good news". This is a scene of millennial blessing. The people are to be regathered; the land possessed and the Messiah-King is to reign (**Jeremiah 33:15**). Look back to God's Covenant with David (**II Samuel 7:8-16**).

The New Covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jeremiah saw that if there was to be any hope for his people, it could not be by a return to the old covenant made through Moses. God showed him a new covenant: a covenant of "grace", not law - not an outward command demanding obedience, but an inward renewal causing them to have a holy desire and motive. This new covenant was to be centered in the Son of David (**Hebrews 8:6-7**). Jeremiah's words are quoted in **Hebrews 8:8-12**.

Jeremiah did not see this present church age, but he clearly saw the glories of the Kingdom of Christ beyond this age.

Some Divine Truths Taught By Jeremiah

1. That God calls men to speak for Him (1:5-9).
2. That God rules in the affairs of men (18:6-10).
3. That sin does not go unnoticed (17:5-6).
4. That God will faithfully keep His promise to Israel (31:1-9).
5. That God would send Messiah and set up His reign (23:5-6).

LAMENTATIONS

This Book looks "back" to the same event which Jeremiah prophesied in the previous Book; namely, the fall of Jerusalem. This is a Book of "mourning" because he saw his people taken and the holy city destroyed.

The title comes from the Hebrew "QINOTH" and Greek "THRENOI" meaning lamentations or to cry aloud.

This Book is a part of a Jewish grouping called "Megilloth" or "Rolls", made up of five Books which the Jews read publicly at Jewish festivals:

1. The Song of Solomon at the Passover.
2. Ruth at the Feast of Pentecost.
3. Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles.
4. Esther at the Feast of Purim.
5. Lamentations at the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Style and Structure

Lamentations is a set of five poems or elegies. The Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 each have 22 verses. Chapter 3 has three times that number (66). Bear in mind that the Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. Chapter 1, 2 and 4: each verse begins with each letter of the alphabet. Chapter 3 does this in triplets: the first 3 verses begin with the first letter, etc. Chapter 5 has 22 verses but does not follow the same pattern.

1. The Plight of Jerusalem - Chapter 1.
2. The anger of Jehovah - Chapter 2.
3. The Grief of Jeremiah - Chapter 3.
4. Again, the Anger of Jehovah - Chapter 4.
5. The Prayer of Jerusalem - Chapter 5.

The Message of The Book

1. The mourning over Jerusalem because of her sin (1:18-21). Luke 13:34-35.
2. Confession of sin (3:59; 5:16). Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9.
3. A ray of hope. Babylon was the conqueror and Jerusalem the conquered. In the future it would glory for Jerusalem and doom for Babylon. (3:21-32 ; 5:21) Colossians 1:4-5.
4. The Mercy and Goodness of God (3:21-32), and we can say with Jeremiah, "great is thy faithfulness" (3:23). 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

FOR NEXT WEEK:
READ EZEKIEL
7 CHAPTERS EACH DAY