

JER

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

THE PROMISE-KEEPER CRUSHES UNBELIEF

J E R E M I A H

GOOD SHEPHERD

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KEY PHRASE

This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'" JER 6:16

"... I AM the LORD, who shows mercy, justice, and righteousness on earth, for I delight in these things, declares the LORD. JER 9:24 A great verse to learn by heart.

- I. JER 1-10, God calls Jeremiah and proclaims, *"I have put My words in your mouth"* (Jer 1:9). Jeremiah reveals God's judgement on people who refused to repent. God exposes their faithlessness, angry over their brazen rebellion. He urges repentance. *This is what the Lord says. The wise man should not boast in his wisdom. The strong man should not boast in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches. Instead, let those who boast boast about this: that they have understanding, and that they know Me. They know that I AM the LORD, who shows mercy, justice, and righteousness on earth, for I delight in these things, declares the LORD. Jer 9:23-24.*
- II. JER 11-28, God kept warning of the coming destruction. God revealed His hard and holy promise. At one point God said, **"Do not pray for these people... I *will not listen when they call to Me* because of their disaster"** (Jer. 11:14)." Willful wickedness is seen in the constant trust in fake gods, the sacrifices they were giving to lying spiritual authorities. **"The *heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.*"** Jer. 17:9
- III. JER 29-38, God reveals a New Covenant and announces He would deliver His people after the captivity. Jeremiah 29:11 **"For I know the *plans* I have for you," declares the LORD, "*plans* to prosper you and not to harm you, *plans* to give you hope and a future."** Yet King Zedekiah throws Jeremiah into prison and then out of there into a cistern. But Jeremiah faithfully warned that the King of Babylon was going to still come and defeat Judah.
- IV. JER 39-52, Jeremiah records the events of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

At first glance, The Book of Jeremiah has no real order to it. It jumps back and forth through time, and includes different kinds of material: prophecies regarding Judah's doom, histories about Jeremiah himself, and poetic threats about bloody fate of other bloodthirsty nations.

NEXT TIME: LAMENTATIONS

There are also passages where, rather than prophesying, Jeremiah laments his sufferings as a persecuted outcast. God chose him before God formed him in the womb of his mother. Jeremiah even gets mad at God. He accused God of abandoning him. He was so down in the dumps and in such a friendless place Jeremiah wished he'd never been born. It's *hard* out here for a godly believer following God's ways. Jeremiah is the record of a soul put through the furnace of trials.

In his long ministry Jeremiah warned about the coming total destruction of Jerusalem. They called Jeremiah a traitor and troublemaker. Obviously no one is interested in hearing about their imminent and gruesome demise. But Jeremiah remembered what God revealed to him in chapter 1:7. "*The LORD said to me, 'Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone to whom I send you and say whatever I command you.*" So that was Jeremiah's purpose in life. "*Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them.*" Jer 1:17

Yes, Jeremiah dealt with kings who want to imprison him or execute him. Spiritual leaders had him beat up and put into the stocks. King Jehoiakim tossed a copy of Jeremiah's only copy of God's book into a fireplace. And King Zedekiah gave people permission to kill Jeremiah (though he also helps save him—go figure.) In all of this, Jeremiah trusted God's promises: *They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I AM with you and will rescue you, "declares the LORD."* Jer 1:19

Eventually, Judah and Jerusalem are ransacked, burned. Just like God promised, most of the population got dragged off to Babylon. Jeremiah winds up reluctantly dragged off to Egypt with a bunch of Judeans who—according to God—are also all doomed to perish as Babylon attacked Egypt. In contrast to the doom-and-gloom narrative of most of the book, scattered throughout are encouraging words for those who are listening to God, repenting and trusting in Him. In particular, God recorded four entire chapters, 30-33, known as the "*Bright Book of Consolation*."

These are like God's warm hugs of hope, His powerful messages of peace and safety. They are four chapters of rock-solid mercy and kindness. These chapters stand like an island in the middle of a terrifying oceanic storm of forty-eight howling chapters. All around are swirling and frightening warnings of God's wrath. But the storm has no lasting effect on the solid rock of God's island.

Jeremiah relied on God who said His believers will be led back to Himself. This time things will be different. They'll worship God with full devotion. They won't just go through the motions while actually wishing they were home watching "Real Housewives of Jericho." On the inside and outside, God's believers will be in a real relationship with the living God. "*The days are coming, "declares the LORD, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.*" Jer 23:5

Finally in Jeremiah 50:17-18 God declares, *Israel is a scattered flock of sheep ... Therefore this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will certainly punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria.* (The capital of Assyria was destroyed so severely it was not discovered until the 19th century A.D.)

1 What do we do when we think our country is falling apart?

2 Why is life so hard?

3 What's wrong with me?

4. What good is faith and doing the right thing?

NEXT: LAMENTATIONS

GOOD SHEPHERD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Wisconsin Rapids, WI, USA

Pastors: John Melke; Paul A.Tullberg | Educator/Principal Donna Tullberg

1 What do we do when we think our country is falling apart?

Jeremiah 1:19 "It is your own evil that will bring discipline on you. Your backsliding will judge you. Know and see how evil and bitter it is for you to forsake the Lord your God, to have no fear of Me, declares the LORD God of Armies.

Jeremiah 2:13 "For My people have committed two evils: They have abandoned Me, the spring of living water, and they have dug their own broken cisterns that hold no water!"

Jeremiah 6:16 "This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Jeremiah 7:2-5 "Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who are coming through this gate to worship the Lord. This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says. Reform your ways and your actions, and I will establish you in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "*This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.*" Sincerely reform your ways and your actions."

2 Why is life so hard?

Jeremiah 7:13 You have done all these things, declares the Lord. Even though I spoke to you again and again, you did not listen. I called you, but you did not answer."

Jeremiah 20:10-11 "I hear many whispering, "Terror on every side!" All my close friends, those who are watching for my fall, say, "Denounce him! Let's denounce him. Perhaps he can be pressured into making a mistake. Then we will have the upper hand against him, and we will take our revenge on him." ¹¹ But the LORD is with me like a terrifying warrior.

3 What's wrong with me?

Jeremiah 17:9-10 "The heart is more deceitful than anything. It is beyond cure. Who can understand it? I, the LORD, am the One who searches the heart and examines the mind..."

Jeremiah 23:21-24 "In later days you will understand it fully. I did not send these prophets, yet they ran. I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, they would have made My people hear My words, and they would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds. Am I a God who is only nearby, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 1:19 "I AM with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD."

4. What good is faith and doing the right thing?

Jeremiah 31:10-12 "Say that the Lord who scattered Israel will gather him and watch over him like a Shepherd watching His flock. For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem him from the hand of the one who is stronger than him. They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion, and they will rejoice in the goodness of the LORD."

Jeremiah 32:16-19 "I prayed to the LORD: Ah, LORD God! You are the One who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm. There is nothing that is too difficult for you. You show mercy to thousands, but you repay the guilt of the fathers into the laps of their children after them. Great and powerful God, the LORD of Armies is your name! You give sound guidance, and your deeds are mighty. Your eyes are open to all the ways of mankind."