

## JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was the young son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. The kings following Josiah were all evil by atrocious deeds and worshiping idols. Their time as a nation was coming to an end when God called Jeremiah to speak to the kings and people of Judah telling them that He would fight against them. Countless times for over forty years he delivered God's message - repent and return or destruction would come to Judah - but most of the time they rejected God's message. Only a few of Jeremiah's messages are presented below. Sometimes a ray of hope was proclaimed if only they would repent and return. Finally, God allowed them to be taken into Babylon captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. But His message was to repent and return or face certain destruction.

### Judah

“Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,’” declares the Lord. (Jer 3:12-13)

“If you will return, O Israel, return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ then the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory.” (Jer 4:1-2)

“Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.” (Jer 5:1)

“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)

“Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live 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!” If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever.” (Jer 7:3-7)

“But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. ... My anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground, and it will burn and not be quenched. ... So beware, the days are coming, the land will become desolate. ... But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord.” (Jer 7:8, 20, 32, 34, 8:7)

“Listen to the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. Tell them that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Cursed is the man who does not obey the terms of this covenant. ... I warned them again and again, saying, “Obey me.” But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts.” (Jer 11:2-3; 7-8)

### Prayer of Jeremiah

“I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, Lord, but only with justice — not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing. Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him completely and destroyed his homeland.” (Jer 10:23-25)

“Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague. ... The prophets are prophesying lies in my name.” (Jer 14:11-12; 14)

“If you repent, I will restore you, if you utter worthy, not worthless, words. ... When they ask you, ‘Why has the Lord decreed such a great disaster against us? What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the Lord our God?’ Then say to them, ‘It is because your fathers forsook me,’ declares the Lord, ‘and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. But you have behaved more wickedly than your fathers.’” (Jer 15:19; 16:10-12)

### Plots Against Jeremiah

“The men of Anathoth said ‘Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands’. But God said - I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. Not even a remnant will be left to them, because I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth in the year of their punishment.” (Jer 11:21-23)

“The priest Pashhur heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the Lord's temple. ... Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends.” (Jer 20:1-3; 6)

“Speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the Lord. ... This is what the Lord says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth. When the priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak they seized him and said “you must die!” (Jer 26:2, 4-9)

“The captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him, brought him to the officials and said, ‘You are deserting to the Babylonians!’ They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison. Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. ... The officials said to the king, ‘This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin.’ ‘He is in your hands,’ King Zedekiah answered. ‘The king can do nothing to oppose you.’ So, they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern. ... This is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live. But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you

yourself will not escape from their hands.’ ... Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.” (Jer 37:13-16; 38:4-6; 17-18; 28)

When Babylon captured Jerusalem Jeremiah was found a prisoner of Judah chained in the court yard. He was released and given a choice to go to Babylon or stay at his home. He chose to stay.

#### A Worried King

“King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur to ‘Inquire now of the Lord for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the Lord will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us.’ ... God of Israel, says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians who are outside the wall besieging you. ... I will strike down those who live in this city.” (Jer 21:1-2; 4, 6)

Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne. (Jer 22:3-4)

Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. (Jer 23:16)

#### God Is Faithful- He Keeps His Word

##### Destruction A Certainty

“I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. ... ‘See, I will refine and test them, for what else can I do because of the sin of my people? ... I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will pursue them with the sword until I have destroyed them.’” (Jer 8:10, 9:7, 9:15-16)

“I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them.” (Jer 11:11)

“I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them.” (Jer 13:9-10)

“I will send four kinds of destroyers against them,” declares the Lord, “the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. For they have forsaken me.” (Jer 15:3-4)

“I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; he will escape with his life.” (Jer 21:8-10)

“I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt. I will make them abhorrent and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a byword, an object of ridicule and cursing.” (Jer 24:8-9)

“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the Lord says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon. You will not die by the sword; you will die peacefully.’” (Jer 34:2-5)

“This is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened.” (Jer 36:30-31)

“The God of Israel, says: Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of me, 'Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. When the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.’” (Jer 37:7-8)

After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property. (Jer 37:11-12)

When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah. But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. (Jer 39:4-7)

#### Destruction of Surrounding Nations

“As for all my wicked neighbors who seize the inheritance, I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance and his own country. And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the Lord lives' — even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal — then they will be established among my people. But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it.” (Jer 12:14-17)

“Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jer 25:8-11)

“Send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.’” (Jer 27:3-6)

Egypt, Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Kedar, Hazor, were all destroyed as Jeremiah had prophesied. (Jer 46-49)

#### Babylon

“This is the word the Lord spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians. ... I will stir up and bring against Babylon an alliance of great nations from the land of the north. They will take up their positions against her, and from the north, she will be captured. ... The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes because his purpose is to destroy Babylon. The Lord will take vengeance, vengeance for his temple.” (Jer 50:1, 9; 51:11)

For the Lord is a God of retribution; he will repay in full. (Jer 51:56)

#### False Prophets

“Some of the elders said "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah ‘Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill, a mound overgrown with thickets.’” (Jer 26:17)

“Do not listen to the prophets who say, 'Very soon now the articles from the Lord's house will be brought back from Babylon.' They are prophesying lies to you. Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live.” (Jer 27:16-17)

“Hananiah the prophet falsely prophesied ‘I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the Lord's house.’ ... ‘Listen, Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die.’” (Jer 28:2-3; 15-16)

#### To Babylon Captives

“I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. ... But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians.” (Jer 24:5; 25:12)

“To all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.’ ... ‘Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you.’ ... ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.’” (Jer 29:4-5; 8; 10-11)

“‘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. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’” (Jer 29:11-13)

### Plans for Distant Future

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.’” (Jer 17:9-10)

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.’” (Jer 23:5-6)

“‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.’” (Jer 31:31-34)

### Key Points from Jeremiah

- Jehovah God wants all His people to be faithful to His covenant by doing His will.
- God is patient with those who rebel by disobedience and sin.
- Prove religious leader’s opinions and interpretations by searching the Scriptures, Bible, to prove God’s will.
- Many opportunities are present if one is looking to repent, return and be restored to God.
- God always forgives those who wholeheartedly seek to do His will.
- Weep for those who cannot or will not return to God.