

First Impressions of the Prophet Jeremiah and His Message

Setting:

- Primary ministry spanning the final 5 kings of Judah centered in/around Jerusalem (627-586 BC)
- Apostate Judah invaded three times by Babylonians involving much suffering, deportations and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (605, 597, 588-586 BC)
- Significant number of remaining contingent in Judah unadvisedly flees to Egypt (584 BC)

Personal Matters:

- Jeremiah was instructed not to marry nor have children (16:2)
- He was vehemently opposed for his unpopular messages (18:18, 26:8, 38:1-6)
- He consistently found refuge through his honest dialogues with the LORD (chaps 12, 14-15, 20)

Intended Audiences:

- Jeremiah's Israelite contemporaries in Jerusalem/Judah prior to and during the Babylonian threat
- Sojourning Israelites fleeing to Egypt following final Babylonian destruction of Judah in addition to exiled Jews in Babylon
- Future generations of Jews needing hope for a brighter future
- Nations/peoples of the world in any age (including the church and our nation today)

Primary Themes:

- Judah's apostasy and the nations' arrogance as due cause for the LORD's judgment
- Dialogues and struggles of the LORD's messenger
- The discipline of the LORD through the Babylonians as the path to life
- Hope of the New Covenant under the rule of the coming ideal Davidic King

Basic Outline/Plan of Study:

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| Jun 6 | 1. The LORD's call of Jeremiah (1:1-19) / Apostate Judah (2:1-3:5) |
| Jun 13 | 2. Aspects of true repentance (3:6-4:4) / Doom from the North (4:5-6:30) |
| Jun 20 | 3. False worship (7:1-10:25) / The curse (11:1-17) |
| Jun 27 | 4. Conversations with the LORD (11:18-16:21) / Heart matters (17:1-27) |
| Jul 4 | (no class) |
| Jul 11 | 5. Lessons from pottery (18:1-20:18) / Leaders in Judah (21:1-23:40) |
| Jul 18 | 6. Embracing the LORD's discipline at the hands of the Babylonians (24:1-29:32) |
| Jul 25 | 7. Future restoration (30:1-33:26) / Present disregard for the LORD: Part 1 (34:1-35:19) |
| Aug 1 | 8. Present disregard for the LORD: Part 2 (36:1-44:30) |
| Aug 8 | 9. Baruch (45:1-5) / The nations (46:1-51:64) / Epilogue (52:1-34) |

Summary remarks of one Jeremiah commentator:

"Precisely in that Jeremiah's was a message of judgment, it was a saving message. By ruthlessly demolishing false hope, by ceaselessly asserting that the tragedy was Yahweh's doing, His righteous judgment on the nation for its sin, Jeremiah as it were drew the national disaster within the framework of faith, and thus prevented it from destroying faith. While many were being swept from their moorings, and others were plumbing the depths of despair, those who heard and received the prophetic word were given something to cling to. The tragedy could not be for them the death of God, for even in the tragedy He was in sovereign control, and unimpeachably just. Such men would be driven - through despair and beyond it - to a searching of their own hearts, to penitence, and a new commitment.

Bright, John. 1965. *Jeremiah*. (vol. 21 of Anchor Bible Commentary Series, p. CXIV). Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company

Lesson 1: Jeremiah 1:1-3:5

I. The LORD's call of Jeremiah (1:1-19)

A. Context of Jeremiah's Words (1-3):

1. Family in Anathoth: Born in the last stages of Judah's disobedience. Born into a clan of priests.

2. Politics: Final kings of Judah prior to the exile:

Noted: Josiah (640-609 BC) Jehoiakim (609-597) Zedekiah (597-586)

Not noted: Jehoiachaz (609) Jehoiachin (597)

3. The word of the LORD: "came to me" Formed = used of a potter shaping clay. 3 months the only good king. Reform was from the top down; not a grass-roots heart change in the people. 3 month

B. The LORD's Initial Call of Jeremiah (4-10)

1. Before the LORD formed Jeremiah in the womb (4-5):

• He knew him:

Like a potter shaping clay

• He consecrated him:

"I gave you away" → for My purpose

• He appointed him a prophet to the nations:

"I don't know what to say!"

• Gal 1:15, Ps 139:13-16

2. Objections to the divine call raised and answered (6-9):

"Do not say 'I am a youth.'"

"I've put my words in your mouth."

You don't have to manufacture the word

3. The LORD's encapsulated message for Jeremiah's ministry (10):

"To pluck up and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant"

pluck up
tear down
destroy

plant
build

Judgment in order to Rebuild.

C. Two symbols to assist Jeremiah's understanding (11-16)

1. Almond rod (11): heb. shaked; 'I am watching' (12): heb. shoked

It was a play on words. What I say to you

When God strikes it's with a redemptive purpose.

2. Boiling pot tilting from the North (13-16): through you, I am standing behind



contents boiling out = disaster coming from North. it WILL HAPPEN.

D. The LORD's concluding charge and encouragement (17-19)

Get busy. NOT EASY. You will face opposition.

God is bringing the trouble. How come? They are forsaking me.

E. General observations from this chapter concerning:

1. The LORD: Intentional, Purposeful

2. The LORD's messenger: FEAR, hesitation, inadequacy. Me → you will sink.

3. The LORD's people: Wayward "I'm not your man."

F. For personal reflection:

1. Could it be possible that the LORD has a pre-determined plan for my life? What is it?

2. Do I have objections to His call upon my life? What does He say about them?

3. Is there a primary message or burden He is laying on my heart for the benefit of others?

II. Apostate Judah (2:1-3:10)

Apostasy (Webster): The renunciation of a religious faith; abandonment of a previous loyalty. It can happen consciously over a short time, as in a revolt, or more unconsciously over a long time, as in backsliding. In Jeremiah's terms, it means to TUEN (heb. 'shuv') away from the LORD as the one Source of life, in favor of false substitutes.

↳ so subtle you often don't know it's happening.

- A. Early love in the barren wilderness (2:1-3)
"the devotion of your youth." → during the Wilderness Wanderings = honeymoon.
- B. Later evil in the fruitful Land (2:7-11)
"What's happened?!"
Compared to where they were currently, the wilderness looked like the honeymoon.
- C. Exchanging the Spring for leaking cisterns (2:13)

Spring = inexhaustible supply.

You got prosperous & started looking in other directions.

- D. Blatant indications of Judah's apostasy:
 - ① Forsaken ME
 - ② Hewn out broken cistern

1. Purchasing military assistance through foreign alliances (2:14-19, 36-37)
Political peace
2. The prevalence of Baal worship from Ancient Canaan influencing the LORD's people (2:20-28)
 - Baal - the storm god with human vices (23):
The one who sent the rain/fertility on the land.
Canaanites were under God's judgment.
Human vices = sexually deviant. Competition w/ other gods.
 - Hilltop and valley shrines with stone and wooden idols (27):
"High places" Stone/Tree → attributing their origin to false source.
Huge perversion of a true holy God
 - Spiritual and physical prostitution (20):
↳ leaving your true love & going after false gods.

Other information concerning early Canaanite religion/practice and its influence on Israel: Num 25:1-9, Lev 18:1-30, Dt 7:1-6, 12:1-5, 29-31, 18:9-15, Jud 2:11-13, 2 Kg 21:1-9, Jer 19:4-6, Ps 106:34-39, Hos 4:11-13. It was characterized primarily by idolatry, inappropriate sex, and occultism, with perhaps the crowning abomination being the sacrificial burning of children.

↳ encouraging Baal to pour out his fertility on us.

↳ morning after abortion pill

3. Hardness towards the LORD's correction (2:29-3:5)
It's a big deal & it corrupted the people of God. Incest, homosexuality
Whole debate "What is marriage" is going back to ancient Canaan.
Bringing a curse on our land.

Central issues that any individual, group or nation must come to terms with:

1. Who/what do we consider to be the source, the sustainer and the motivator of life?
2. For what purpose do we exist? Who/what is the recipient/object of our deepest affections and loyalties?

60 million abortions
Are we not doing what Judah did & the Canaanites.

New Testament considerations:

1. Rev 2:4 (Christ to the church in Ephesus) "You have left your first love..."
2. Matt 24:4-13 (Christ to his disciples) "At that time many will fall away..."
3. Jude 24-25 (Christ's brother to an unnamed church) "Now to Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you blameless..."

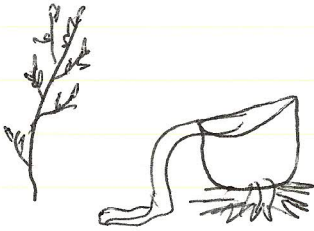
What substitutes for God?

Materialism
401K plan
Sports
Entertainment
Trash movies/books - secretly involved with.
Canaanitism is infecting people of God today.

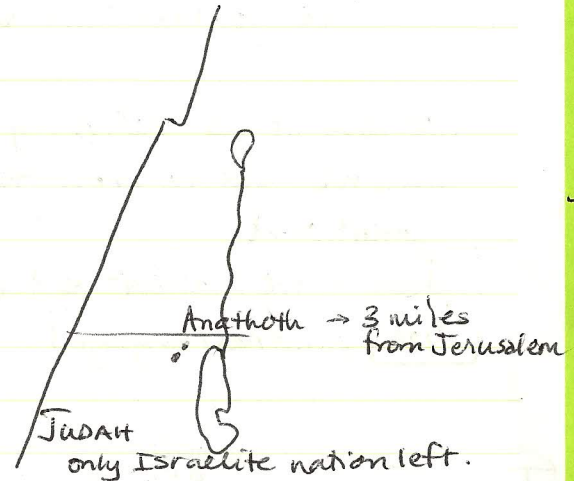
JEREMIAH 1:1 - 3:5

600 BC.

JUDAH
↓
Wayward Jews



JEREMIAH
↓
struggling



Jeremiah is born in the last stages of Judah's disobedience,
Born into a clan of priests → father was active priest. He may
have been groomed as a priest; not clear.

640 - 586 BC.

There was an intimate acquaintance with the vessel the
potter was forming.

I consecrated you = "I gave you away"

Biblical definition of prophet →

One who receives the Word of God &
transmits it to the people.

I will be your adequacy. I will cover for your inadequacies.

Renovating. Estimating.

Before starting work —

3 months of demolition.

Selective demo → before the buildings can be renovated.

Before I can do any building we have to tear down the junk.

Messages are weighted on the
destructive side 4:2
neg./pos.

It's interesting what God doesn't tell him at this time -

He wouldn't have been ready for it. Ex: you won't be able to get married,

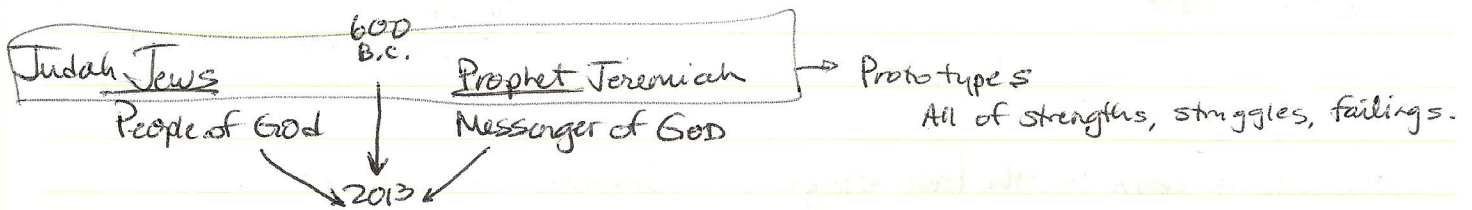
For any of us delivering any message

we need to know that it means what it says.

Intentional

Just - He doesn't sit around & let his people continue

Very personal/engaged



All of God's people called to be a messenger