

Bible Reading Notes  
**Jeremiah**

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## Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah was a contemporary of Zephaniah whose ministry started five years before Josiah's reforms. His ministry was from 627-586 BC.

- 1:1 – **one of the priests** – Jeremiah was both a prophet and a priest.
- 1:6 – Jeremiah's response to the Lord is very similar to Moses when he was called (Exodus 4:10).
- 1:13-16 – **facing away from the north** – This is a reference to Babylon, whom the Lord will use to bring judgment against Israel.
- 1:19 – **will fight against you** – Jeremiah's ministry will be one of the most difficult of any of the prophets.

## Jeremiah 2

- 2:8 – The leadership of Israel has failed and will face God's judgment for their failures.
- 2:11 – Israel's great and perplexing sin is that they have forsaken the true God for idols which are nothing. This will be the cause of their coming judgment.
- 2:16 – **shaved the crown of your head** – Some commentators believe this is a reference to the death of Josiah by the Egyptians.
- 2:23 – **valley** – This is a reference to the Himmon Valley mention in Jeremiah 7:31.
- 2:32 – **a bride her attire** – It is unthinkable that a bride would forget her wedding dress, yet Israel has forgotten something far more important – her God.

## Jeremiah 3

Jeremiah 3 shows Israel as an unfaithful bride who has gone off after many other lovers (idols).

**3:1** – This practice was outlawed in Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

**3:6-14** – Judah's great sin is that they saw the consequences of unfaithfulness on Israel's part but did not heed the lesson, so they too will experience the Lord's judgment.

**3:15ff** – Once again judgment is not the final word. The Lord will be gracious to his people in response to their repentance.

## Jeremiah 4

**4:5-18** – The Lord's judgment on Israel will come from the Babylonians. Jeremiah pictures the response to the Babylonian invasion.

**4:23-26** – The desolation brought by the Babylonians will be like creation being undone and reverting back to the chaos before the Lord brought order in the days of creation.

## Jeremiah 5

**5:1** – Abraham looked for 10 men to spare Sodom. The Lord looks for a single righteous man and can't find him.

**5:3** – They have been corrected but it has resulted in hardening rather than repentance.

**5:18** – The judgment of the Lord will be great, but he will not completely destroy his covenant people.

## Jeremiah 6

**6:10** – **an object of scorn** - One of Israel's great sins was a refusal to listen to and receive the word of God.

**6:15** – **did not know how to blush** – Jeremiah is going to use this language several times in the book to describe the great depths of sin into which Israel had fallen.

**6:16** – **ancient paths** – The path of covenant faithfulness established by Moses.

## Jeremiah 7

**7:4** – **temple of the Lord** – Some believed that because they had the temple of the Lord, Jerusalem would never be sacked.

**7:5-6** – **if...then** – The only hope for Israel is true repentance.

**7:12 – Shiloh** – This was where the ark of the covenant originally was kept in the land. It was long ago destroyed which reminds Israel that they cannot trust that Jerusalem will be spared because the temple is located there.

**7:16** – Time for God’s grace has passed. Jeremiah is not even to intercede asking the Lord to be gracious. This will be repeated in 11:14.

**7:18 – queen of heaven** – This was a Babylonian goddess that Israel had been worshipping.

**7:25-26 – my servants the prophets** – God is not acting impulsively. For centuries he has sent his prophets to warn his people, but that warning has been disregarded.

## Jeremiah 8

**8:9 – what wisdom is in them?** – When we reject the word of the Lord, we show that we are not wise, but foolish.

**8:18 – My joy is gone** – One can see why Jeremiah is referred to as the weeping prophet. His ministry is one of proclaiming the horrors that will come upon his land and people (c.f. 9:1ff).

## Jeremiah 9

**9:13-14** – The causes of Israel’s judgment.

**9:24** – This verse is quoted by Paul in both 1 Corinthians 1:31 and 2 Corinthians 10:17.

## Jeremiah 10

The background to today's reading is Israel's great sin of idolatry. This was the primary sin that will send her into exile.

**10:6-7** – Instead of worshiping the gods of the nations, worship the King of the nations.

**10:11-16** – The power and work of the LORD in contrast to the idols who do nothing.

**10:11** – This verse is in Aramaic, the language understood by the nations to whom the message is to be delivered.

## Jeremiah 11

**11:10-11** – Israel has broken covenant with the Lord and so the Lord will bring disaster upon them – the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28.

**11:14** – **do not pray** – The decree and time for judgment has come. Jeremiah is not to pray otherwise (c.f. 7:16).

**11:21** – **Anathoth** – This was Jeremiah's hometown (1:1) who determined to kill Jeremiah because they did not like his message of judgment.

## Jeremiah 12

12:1-4 – Jeremiah complains about the wicked. When will the Lord do something?

12:5-13 – The Lord's response is that he is going to deal with his wicked people in the judgment about to come.

12:14-17 – The Lord ends with grace. After judgment, the nations will have the opportunity to turn to the Lord and be part of his people. This looks forward to fulfillment in Acts.

## Jeremiah 13

13:1-11 – One of the many tasks the Lord gives his prophets to convey a picture of what he is doing.

13:4 – **go to the Euphrates** – Many commentators believe that the correct text is "Parah" which was about three miles away rather than the Euphrates which was hundreds of miles away.

13:7 – **good for nothing** – Description of the state of Israel.

13:15-27 – The Lord will send Israel into exile for her great sins and it will come about by the Babylonians whom Israel had once trusted in (vv. 20-21).



## Jeremiah 14

The background to today's reading is found in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 where the Lord promises covenant curses when his people are unfaithful to him. These chapters reflect the fulfillment of the Lord's word and indicates why he will not relent.

**14:1-10** – Israel is suffering under a severe drought and the cause is her sin (v. 7).

**14:10-12** – This is the Lord's response to the prayer of v. 7.

## Jeremiah 15

**15:1** – Moses and Samuel were considered great intercessors for God's people in their day. Not even their intercession will sway God's determination to bring judgment on Israel.

**15:15 – persecutors** – Jeremiah's message has not been well received and many are rising up against him.

**15:20-21** – But the Lord will keep and deliver Jeremiah from his persecutors.

## Jeremiah 16

**16:5** – Earlier God has told Jeremiah to not pray for Israel. Now he commands him to not mourn or grieve for them as well.

**16:10-13** – The reason for the Lord’s judgment on Israel.

**16:14-21** – After exile, there will be restoration. God will bring his people back to the Land of Promise.

## Jeremiah 17

**17:5-8** – Cursed is the man who looks to other men (Egypt) instead of the Lord in their times of need.

**17:19-27** – Sabbath keeping was one of the signs that Israel was given to show her distinctiveness (Exodus 31:13). To ignore the Sabbath command was to live like the pagans. In doing so, they would warrant the judgment of God.

## Jeremiah 18

**18:1-6** – This is the background to Paul’s use of the same imagery in Romans 9:20-21.

**18:14** – Each of these questions expects a negative answer.

**18:23** – **Forgive not their iniquity** – This prayer of Jeremiah may sound harsh, but it is in conformity with what the Lord has already announced he would do.

## Jeremiah 19

- 19:2 – Valley of the Son of Hinnom** – Place in Jeremiah's day that parents were sacrificing their firstborn sons to Baal (v. 5).
- 19:7-9** – The Lord speaks of some of the horrors that awaits Jerusalem when Babylon lays siege to the city.

## Jeremiah 20

- 20:1 – these things** – The destruction of Jerusalem outlined in chapter 19.
- 20:7-9** – The hardships of being the Lord's prophet are greater than Jeremiah had thought they would be, but he is compelled to continue.
- 20:14-18** – Reminiscent of the words of Job in the midst of his suffering (Job 3).

## Jeremiah 21

- 21:1 – Zedekiah** – Was made king by the Babylonians in 597 BC. His rebellion against Babylon ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- 21:8 – the way of life and the way of death** – The Lord set this same option before Israel when the covenant was renewed in Deuteronomy 30:19.

## Jeremiah 22

**22:11 – Shallum** – This is Jehoahaz who was exiled to Egypt in 609 BC (2 Kings 23:31-33).

**22:24 – Coniah** – This is another name for Jehoichin who reigned for 3 months after his father was taken by Babylon with the first group of exiles in 605 BC. After his short reign, he too was taken to Babylon.

## Jeremiah 23

**23:1 – shepherds** – This term is used often in the Old Testament to refer to Israel's leaders.

**23:5** – Since Israel's leaders have failed, the Lord will raise up a new leader – the Branch – a reference to Christ - who will lead in righteousness.

## Jeremiah 24

**24:1** – This happened in 597 BC.

**24:8-10** – Zedekiah was the last king of Israel. These verses reflect the horror of the siege and fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

## Jeremiah 25

**25:1** – This is now back in 605 BC.

**25:11 – seventy years** – This started with the first group exiled in 605 BC.

**25:15** – The Lord’s wrath will not be limited to Israel.

Judgment is coming to all the nations in the area for their sin.

## Jeremiah 26

**26:1** – This event took place in 609 BC.

**26:5 – Shiloh** – This was the location of the tabernacle prior to David. It was destroyed by the Philistines due to Israel’s sin. The temple in Jerusalem will likewise face destruction if Israel will not repent.

**26:19** – This is from Micah 3:12.

**26:20-23** – This is not recorded anywhere else in Scripture.

## Jeremiah 27

**27:1** – This is now twelve years later than chapter 26.

**27:3 – envoys** – These had gathered in Jerusalem to discuss together a joint rebellion against the Babylonians.

**27:18-22** – Jeremiah lays out a test of who is the true prophet – Jeremiah or the prophets who speak of peace and victory over Babylon.

## Jeremiah 28

Chapter 28 focuses on the problem of false prophets who have a popular message, but not one from the Lord.

**28:1** – the same year – This is 593 BC.

**28:17** – Judgment against Hananiah was quick. He died two months after his false prophecy (v. 1).

## Jeremiah 29

**29:7** – This command has ongoing application for us who are sojourners awaiting the time we can go home to be with the Lord.

**29:11** – This verse is often misapplied. The Lord does have plans for Israel, but they include many years in exile and under his hand of discipline. There will be a future and hope, but only after suffering and trials.

**29:13-14** – Restoration will come about through genuine repentance and seeking the Lord with all their hearts.

## Jeremiah 30

Today's reading focuses on the grace the Lord will show Israel. Exile is inevitable, but it is not the end. The Lord will bring his people back to the Promised Land.

- 30:11** – God’s dealings with the nations will be different from the way he deals with his covenant people. Israel’s discipline will one day come to an end.
- 30:22** – This is the classic covenant promise. This will not be changed by the exile to Babylon.

## **Jeremiah 31**

- 31:15** – Matthew quotes this verse as finding fulfillment in Herod’s killing of babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:18).
- 31:31ff** – The promise of a new covenant. This is the new covenant inaugurated by Christ. Because it is based on Christ’s work, it cannot be broken by the sins of man, like the old covenant. The writer to the Hebrews quotes vv. 31-34 in Hebrews 8:8-12.
- 31:33** – In the new covenant the moral law of God is still functioning. But for the believer the law is not merely external, the Lord writes it on our hearts (Hebrews 10:16-17), by the Holy Spirit, who enables us to obey.

## **Jeremiah 32**

- 32:1** - This takes place in 587 BC. Jerusalem will fall in less than one year.
- 32:16-25** – Jeremiah expresses his confusion to the Lord in prayer. Why is the Lord having Jeremiah buy a piece of land if the Lord is going to destroy the land? Because the Lord will once again bring his people back and bless them (vv. 36ff).

## Jeremiah 33

**33:1ff** – The Lord promises that he will restore Jerusalem and bring great blessing again to his covenant people.

**33:15 – Branch** = Name of Christ used by Isaiah and Zechariah to refer to the Messiah who would spring forth from the line of David.

**33:17-18** – Christ would fulfill both the kingly office and the priestly office.

## Jeremiah 34

**34:14** – God’s command about this is found in Exodus 21:2 and Deuteronomy 15:12.

**34:18 – the calf** - This imagery is found in God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:7-17).

## Jeremiah 35

**35** – The Lord uses the obedience of the sons of Rechab in contrast to the disobedience of Israel as evidence of the judgment that is about to befall Israel.

**35:15 – persistently** - The Lord had sent prophet after prophet for generations, but Israel had not listened to or heeded their message.



## Jeremiah 36

**36** – This is an illustration of the message Jeremiah gave in chapter 35. Once again Israel will reject the message of the Lord’s prophets.

**36:1 – fourth year of Jehoiakim** – Jeremiah now takes us back 18 years to 605 BC.

**36:9** – This is now December, 604 BC.

## Jeremiah 37

**37:1** – Zedekiah began his reign in 597 BC. He would be the last Jewish king to reign in Jerusalem.

**37:2** – A new king but the same result – refusal to listen to the Lord’s prophet.

## Jeremiah 38

Jeremiah 38 relates the final crisis in Jeremiah’s life prior to the fall of the city.

To the very end the king and people of Jerusalem will not listen to the Lord or his prophet.

## Jeremiah 39

**39:1-2** – Jerusalem was under siege for up to 2 ½ years until the breach in the wall occurred in July, 586 BC.

**39:16 – Ebed-melech** - This is the man that saved Jeremiah from the cistern (38:7ff).

## Jeremiah 41

The Babylonian army has returned home leaving only a few troops under the oversight of the governor, Gedaliah, whom they had set in power.

The events of chapter 41 are a rebellion against the Babylonians led by Ishmael. By killing the governor, they were rebelling against the Babylonians.

**41:5 – temple of the Lord** – They knew the temple had been destroyed but came to offer sacrifices on the temple mount.

## Jeremiah 42

**42:5-6** – Their real response is recorded in 43:2.

**42:21** – This is Jeremiah's discouraging summary of Israel's response to his ministry.

## Jeremiah 43

**43:2** – Their response is in direct conflict with what they had promised (42:5-6).

## Jeremiah 44

**44:10** – Even after the judgment on Jerusalem, the Jews who were left had not repented nor changed (c.f. vv. 16-17).

**44:17** – **queen of heaven** = A Babylonian goddess worshiped by Israel.

## Jeremiah 45

**45:1** – **fourth year of Jehoiakim** – 605 BC, around 20 years earlier than chapters 43 and 44.

**45:3** – Baruch had not counted on great suffering when he became Jeremiah's assistant and now he is discouraged.

## Jeremiah 46

Jeremiah 46 begins a series of messages of judgment against the nations. These messages will continue through chapter 51.

**46:2** – **fourth year of Jehoiakim** – 605 BC. This prophecy of Egypt's demise was given prior to Babylon's ascendancy in the area.

**46:27-28** – Israel will be disciplined by the Lord, but he will not completely destroy her. The day is coming when Israel will return to the Land of Promise.

## Jeremiah 47

**47:1 – Philistines** – They lived west of Israel on the Mediterranean Sea coast and were destroyed by the Babylonians in 604 BC.

**47:5** – Shaving your head and gashing yourself were both practices of mourning. The Philistines were mourning the destruction brought on by the Babylonians.

## Jeremiah 48

**48:1 – Moab** – Is east of Israel on the other side of the Dead Sea and the Moabites were the descendants of Lot and his daughters. It was conquered by the Babylonians in 582 BC, four years after they destroyed Jerusalem.

**48:26 – magnified himself against the Lord** – This is Moab's great sin. It is repeated in v. 42.

## Jeremiah 49

**49:1 – Ammonites** – Ammon was located east of Israel. They fell to Babylon in 582 BC.

**49:1 - Milcom** – Was the chief Ammonite god.

**49:7 – Edom** – These were the descendants of Esau.

**49:13 – Bozrah** – Was the capital of Edom.

**49:23 – Damascus** – This was the capital of Aram, now Syria, and was located NE of Israel

49:28 – **Kedar** – was a nomadic Arab tribe living east of Israel.

49:34 – **Zedekiah** – This took place in 597 BC.

49:34 – **Elam** – was located east of Babylon and so was a great distance from Israel.

## Jeremiah 50

50:2 – **Bel...Merodach** – These were the names of the chief god of the Babylonians.

50:3 – **out of the north** – A reference to the Medes and the Persians who will conquer Babylon in 539 BC.

50:9 – **male goats before the flock** – The male goats tended to be the leaders of a flock when they left their pens.

50:39-40 – This is the current state of the ancient site of Babylon.

## Jeremiah 51

51:5 – The Lord's care for Israel will lead to the Babylonian defeat because Cyrus, the king of Persia, will then release Israel to return to the Promised Land.

51:15-19 – The LORD is the powerful one who will bring this about. He is not like the idols of Babylon who are powerless.

**51:20-26 – You** – This refers to Babylon who was used by God to judge the nations and who will be judged by God in the future.

**51:48 – out of the north** – In the Old Testament God’s judgment is often seen coming out of the north. Here it is a reference to the Medes and Persians.

**51:59-60** – These verses indicate that the previous two chapters were delivered by Jeremiah in 593 BC. Zedekiah was apparently summoned to Babylon in that year.

## **Jeremiah 52**

Jeremiah 52 recounts the consequences of Israel’s covenant unfaithfulness, just as the Lord had said would happen.

**52:28-31** – This is the summary of four deportations that took place between 597-562 BC. The numbers of those deported is smaller than recorded in 2 Kings 24 and may refer only to men or to the officials.



