

Jeremiah and Lamentations

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Jeremiah

1. Jeremiah literally means “Yahweh throws,” and may effectively mean “Yahweh establishes, appoints, or sends.” Known as the “weeping prophet” (9:1; 13:17).
2. Jeremiah lived in Anathoth (2 miles north of Jerusalem) and prophesied during the last 40 years of Judah’s existence, 626 - 586 B.C. (1:1-3).
3. Kings of Judah during Jeremiah’s ministry: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.
4. Contemporary prophets: Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
5. Since the book of Jeremiah is not in chronological order it is impossible to understand apart from knowing the history and condition of the times in which he lived.
6. Possible reason for the lack of chronological order: Jer. 36:27-32, the first scroll was burned and scrolls do not allow the shuffling of pages for a more readable order. Events seem to have been recorded as they were remembered.
7. Jeremiah’s ministry began under the last good king of Judah (Josiah) who brought many reforms to restore order in Judah (cf. 2 Chron. 34:3). However, after Josiah’s death wickedness grew until the Jews were exiled to Babylon.

Outline of Jeremiah

- The Call of Jeremiah (1)
- Prophecies to Judah (2-45)
- Prophecies to the Gentiles (46-51)
- Fall of Jerusalem (52)

The Call of Jeremiah

1. The predestination in Jeremiah’s appointment (1:5; Eph. 1:4).
2. The excuses for wanting to direct our own lives (1:6-8).
3. The ministry given to Jeremiah (1:9,10): to pluck up, break, destroy, overthrow, build and plant (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
4. Application: recognize God’s predestination in our appointments and the adequacy of the Word of God to equip us for every ministry.

A Sample of Jeremiah’s Ministry

1. 3:6-10, a rebuke to Judah for failing to learn from the faithlessness of Israel.
2. 4:14, a planting of biblical instruction to build a life on holiness.
3. 5:23-31, a judgment on those who are in the trap of religion rather than in the dread of God.
4. 17:1,5,7-10, God will reward us according to our deeds, even those who have been deceived by their own hearts.
5. 24:5-7, the Compassion of God.
6. 31:31-34, the New Covenant of God.

Lamentations

1. Lamentations describes the funeral of a city — the last capital city for the people of God as a nation (1:1). Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.
2. Lamentations means “tears.”
3. Jeremiah writes this lament in acrostic or alphabetical fashion, beginning each chapter with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and proceeding verse by verse through all 22 letters. Thus, there are 5 independent poems: chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 have 22 verses each; chapter 3 has 66 verses (3 x 22).
4. The book was formerly part of Jeremiah, which is why English versions of the Bible have placed it immediately following Jeremiah.
5. The reason for the tears over Jerusalem’s destruction: they completely broke covenant with God (see Lev. 26:14-46; Deut. 28:15-68; Josh. 23: 12-16).

Outline of Lamentations

- Jerusalem is destroyed (1)
- God is the destroyer (2)
- A prayer for mercy (3)
- The siege of Jerusalem evaluated (4)
- A final appeal for restoration (5)

A Sample Of The Book With Application

1. See how literally God fulfills his prophecies. He fulfills his word concerning his anger just as much as he does concerning his love.
2. Sin makes us unclean. We sin for failure to consider our future (1:8-9; cf. Deut. 32:29). Sin will certainly be punished.
3. Sin grieves God’s heart and the hearts of his faithful people (1:11-12). Is there any pain like the wrath of God? It destroys nations as well as individuals.
4. God destroys his church and all that is in it (2:5-7). God will allow his temple to be destroyed rather than used improperly. There is nothing more sacred than his holiness.
5. Never give up praying (2:18-20). No situation is hopeless when God is on the throne (3:21-25). Let us pray until there is no hope (5:21-22).