

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### JEREMIAH

The book of Jeremiah is a record of his ministry which extended over forty years, beginning approximately 628 B. C. Several different kings reigned while Jeremiah was prophesying. Each different king most likely influenced Jeremiah and what he taught. It should be noted that Jeremiah did not actually write this book until he was an old man. This means that his writing was based on his memory which explains why it is not written in chronological order. He merely jotted down what popped into his head at any given moment. This makes it difficult to know exactly when he made his various remarks and what events were occurring which caused him to say what he did at any given time.

Scholars have tried to arrange his writings into chronological order, but to no certain avail. One such attempt is shown on the chart in Chapter Twenty-One. The important thing is that we understand the message he was proclaiming, so I have written this commentary on Jeremiah and some of the other prophets as if the information had been presented as one continuous message.

You will find that the work of other prophets was taking place at the same time that Jeremiah was ministering. They include Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Obadiah. We will study these books, as well. In so doing, it helps us to understand better when and why Jeremiah said what is recorded in his book.

Jeremiah's life and teachings had a profound effect on the future development of both Judaism and Christianity. In the New Testament, many passages indicate that both Jesus and Paul not only accepted certain ideas from Jeremiah but gave them a central place in their own interpretations of the meaning of religion. For this reason, along with others, Jeremiah is often regarded as the greatest of the Hebrew prophets.

King Josiah was already on the throne when Jeremiah accepted his calling to be a prophet. Jeremiah states that even before he was born, God had a plan or purpose for his life. His earliest prophecies were concerned with the threatened invasion of Judah by the Scythians

#### JEREMIAH. 1:9-19

9 THEN THE LORD PUT FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOUCHED MY MOUTH. AND THE LORD SAID UNTO ME, BEHOLD, I HAVE PUT MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH.

10 SEE, I HAVE THIS DAY SET THEE OVER THE NATIONS AND OVER THE KINGDOMS, TO ROOT OUT, AND TO PULL DOWN, AND TO DESTROY, AND TO THROW DOWN, TO BUILD, AND TO PLANT.

11 MOREOVER THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME, SAYING, JEREMIAH, WHAT SEEST THOU? AND I SAID, I SEE A ROD OF AN ALMOND TREE.

12 THEN SAID THE LORD UNTO ME, THOU HAST WELL SEEN: FOR I WILL HASTEN MY WORD TO PERFORM IT.

**13 AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME THE SECOND TIME, SAYING, WHAT SEEST THOU? AND I SAID, I SEE A SEETHING POT; AND THE FACE THEREOF IS TOWARD THE NORTH.**

**14 THEN THE LORD SAID UNTO ME, OUT OF THE NORTH AN EVIL SHALL BREAK FORTH UPON ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND.**

**15 FOR, LO, I WILL CALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE NORTH, SAITH THE LORD; AND THEY SHALL COME, AND THEY SHALL SET EVERY ONE HIS THRONE AT THE ENTERING OF THE GATES OF JERUSALEM, AND AGAINST ALL THE WALLS THEREOF ROUND ABOUT, AND AGAINST ALL THE CITIES OF JUDAH.**

**16 AND I WILL UTTER MY JUDGMENTS AGAINST THEM TOUCHING ALL THEIR WICKEDNESS, WHO HAVE FORSAKEN ME, AND HAVE BURNED INCENSE UNTO OTHER GODS, AND WORSHIPPED THE WORKS OF THEIR OWN HANDS.**

**17 THOU THEREFORE GIRD UP THY LOINS, AND ARISE, AND SPEAK UNTO THEM ALL THAT I COMMAND THEE: BE NOT DISMAYED AT THEIR FACES, LEST I CONFOUND THEE BEFORE THEM.**

**18 FOR, BEHOLD, I HAVE MADE THEE THIS DAY A DEFENCED CITY, AND AN IRON PILLAR, AND BRASEN WALLS AGAINST THE WHOLE LAND, AGAINST THE KINGS OF JUDAH, AGAINST THE PRINCES THEREOF, AGAINST THE PRIESTS THEREOF, AND AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND.**

**19 AND THEY SHALL FIGHT AGAINST THEE; BUT THEY SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST THEE; FOR I AM WITH THEE, SAITH THE LORD, TO DELIVER THEE.**

Based on the above information, Jeremiah believed that God was going to allow his country to be destroyed because of the sins of the people. So, that is what he proclaimed. Of course, when this did not happen immediately, the people began to call him a false prophet. However, a few years later, the Book of Deuteronomy was found in the Temple at Jerusalem. King Josiah accepted it as a book from God and began to enforce it as law. This pleased Jeremiah. He hoped that revival would occur in Judah, from both a social standpoint and a spiritual renewal. It did not happen. There was no change in the way the people were living. Jeremiah was very disappointed to realize that there was an innate nature, known as iniquity that caused people to choose sin over a God-like nature.

### **JEREMIAH 13:23**

**23 CAN THE ETHIOPIAN CHANGE HIS SKIN, OR THE LEOPARD HIS SPOTS? THEN MAY YE ALSO DO GOOD, THAT ARE ACCUSTOMED TO DO EVIL.**

Jeremiah stated that such change can only be brought about by God, not any human. He indicated that God desires to make people into new creations and that change must be internal, a change in the heart.

Jeremiah moved from Anathoth to Jerusalem. There he faced persecution from both the government and the religious community due to his outspoken remarks about the Temple and its ineffective services. He stated that something drastic needed to be done to wake the people and inform them that the Temple was not a good luck charm. The

building had no power to ward off enemies and was not to be worshipped. Jeremiah added that the Temple would one day be destroyed. Not only that, but the Ark of the Covenant would be confiscated. Many of the people would be taken captive and carried to a foreign land. None of this set well with King Jehoiakim nor with the priests. So, they charged him with treason. Fortunately, for Jeremiah, God had some of his friends to hide him until things cooled down. Without this, he probably would have been killed.

This did not stop Jeremiah from speaking what God told him to write to King Jehoiakim and his subordinates.

**JEREMIAH 23:5, 6**

**5 BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT I WILL RAISE UNTO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, AND A KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, AND SHALL EXECUTE JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE IN THE EARTH.**

**6 IN HIS DAYS JUDAH SHALL BE SAVED, AND ISRAEL SHALL DWELL SAFELY: AND THIS IS HIS NAME WHEREBY HE SHALL BE CALLED, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Jeremiah states in these verses that the Messiah would be God, a righteous Branch and the Lord our Righteousness.

**JEREMIAH 36:1-3**

**1 AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF JEHOIAKIM THE SON OF JOSIAH KING OF JUDAH, THAT THIS WORD CAME UNTO JEREMIAH FROM THE LORD, SAYING,**

**2 TAKE THEE A ROLL OF A BOOK, AND WRITE THEREIN ALL THE WORDS THAT I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO THEE AGAINST ISRAEL, AND AGAINST JUDAH, AND AGAINST ALL THE NATIONS, FROM THE DAY I SPAKE UNTO THEE, FROM THE DAYS OF JOSIAH, EVEN UNTO THIS DAY.**

**3 IT MAY BE THAT THE HOUSE OF JUDAH WILL HEAR ALL THE EVIL WHICH I PURPOSE TO DO UNTO THEM; THAT THEY MAY RETURN EVERY MAN FROM HIS EVIL WAY; THAT I MAY FORGIVE THEIR INIQUITY AND THEIR SIN.**

He made certain that he warned the king about what was going to happen if things did not change and change quickly. He then sent his writing to the king, who became very angry at the message.

**JEREMIAH 36:22-23**

**22 NOW THE KING SAT IN THE WINTERHOUSE IN THE NINTH MONTH: AND THERE WAS A FIRE ON THE HEARTH BURNING BEFORE HIM.**

**23 AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT WHEN JEHUDI HAD READ THREE OR FOUR LEAVES, HE CUT IT WITH THE PENKNIFE, AND CAST IT INTO THE FIRE THAT WAS ON THE HEARTH, UNTIL ALL THE ROLL WAS CONSUMED IN THE FIRE THAT WAS ON THE HEARTH.**

Still this did not stop Jeremiah. He wrote the same thing over and sent this second message to the king—this time with an added warning.

**JEREMIAH 36::27-31**

**27 THEN THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO JEREMIAH, AFTER THAT THE KING HAD BURNED THE ROLL, AND THE WORDS WHICH BARUCH WROTE AT THE MOUTH OF JEREMIAH, SAYING,**

**28 TAKE THEE AGAIN ANOTHER ROLL, AND WRITE IN IT ALL THE FORMER WORDS THAT WERE IN THE FIRST ROLL, WHICH JEHOIAKIM THE KING OF JUDAH HATH BURNED.**

**29 AND THOU SHALT SAY TO JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH, THUS SAITH THE LORD; THOU HAST BURNED THIS ROLL, SAYING, WHY HAST THOU WRITTEN THEREIN, SAYING, THE KING OF BABYLON SHALL CERTAINLY COME AND DESTROY THIS LAND, AND SHALL CAUSE TO CEASE FROM THENCE MAN AND BEAST?**

**30 THEREFORE THUS SAITH THE LORD OF JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH; HE SHALL HAVE NONE TO SIT UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID: AND HIS DEAD BODY SHALL BE CAST OUT IN THE DAY TO THE HEAT, AND IN THE NIGHT TO THE FROST.**

**31 AND I WILL PUNISH HIM AND HIS SEED AND HIS SERVANTS FOR THEIR INIQUITY; AND I WILL BRING UPON THEM, AND UPON THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM, AND UPON THE MEN OF JUDAH, ALL THE EVIL THAT I HAVE PRONOUNCED AGAINST THEM; BUT THEY HEARKENED NOT.**

Of all his writings, he is noted as having great insight into what was going to happen in the future as to the Old Covenant being replaced with a new one. Jeremiah believed that the Law which was given to Moses had not been effective because humans have a sinful nature that is innate within them. This nature could not be changed just by human will-power. It required an act of God in order for it to be changed.

**JEREMIAH 31:31-33**

**31 BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH:  
32 NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY THAT I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; WHICH MY COVENANT THEY BRAKE, ALTHOUGH I WAS AN HUSBAND UNTO THEM, SAITH THE LORD:**

**33 BUT THIS SHALL BE THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL; AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAITH THE LORD, I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR INWARD PARTS, AND WRITE IT IN THEIR HEARTS; AND WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**

Jeremiah concludes that with these new changed natures people will know right from wrong and will be able to be pleasing to God. Jeremiah sees each individual being accountable for himself rather than the whole society being lumped together under one

umbrella. Each will be judged individually. No person will be able to declare that he/she is have to suffer the consequences of their forefathers' sins.

**JEREMIAH 31:29-30**

**29 IN THOSE DAYS THEY SHALL SAY NO MORE, THE FATHERS HAVE EATEN A SOUR GRAPE, AND THE CHILDREN'S TEETH ARE SET ON EDGE.**

**30 BUT EVERY ONE SHALL DIE FOR HIS OWN INIQUITY: EVERY MAN THAT EATETH THE SOUR GRAPE, HIS TEETH SHALL BE SET ON EDGE.**

More specifically, Jeremiah's main focus in his ministry was to emphasize the importance of an individual, personal relationship with God Almighty. The demands of the Old Testament Law were meaningless unless they helped each individual find a inward connection with God. He realized that God wanted such a relationship, not only in Temple worship, but in the everyday lives of His people. He even proclaimed the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem could serve as a means by which the Children of Israel could discover their relationship with God could be continued wherever they were, even in captivity. Such circumstances would, in a way, force the people to experience God in their hearts rather than depend on the Temple services. In the years to follow, Jeremiah's teachings were pushed aside and external aides were continued as being the main way to worship God. However, as God always had a remnant, a few people adhered to Jeremiah's beliefs.

As we know, Jeremiah was saddened by the majority of his fellow Israelites not accepting his message from God. Even so, he continued to believe that he had heard from God and that one day his people would realize that he had declared the truth. He held on to a belief that even after his homeland would be taken over by enemies, it would be eventually restored. He knew that his land belonged to God and that God's hand would always be upon it, even after he would be taken into captivity and later to experience death.

**JEREMIAH 5:18**

**18 NEVERTHELESS IN THOSE DAYS, SAITH THE LORD, I WILL NOT MAKE A FULL END WITH YOU.**

**JEREMIAH 4:27**

**27 FOR THUS HATH THE LORD SAID, THE WHOLE LAND SHALL BE DESOLATE; YET WILL I NOT MAKE A FULL END.**

**JEREMIAH 46:28**

**28 FEAR THOU NOT, O JACOB MY SERVANT, SAITH THE LORD: FOR I AM WITH THEE; FOR I WILL MAKE A FULL END OF ALL THE NATIONS WHITHER I HAVE DRIVEN THEE: BUT I WILL NOT MAKE A FULL END OF THEE, BUT CORRECT THEE IN MEASURE; YET WILL I NOT LEAVE THEE WHOLLY UNPUNISHED.**

**JEREMIAH 30:11**

**11 I AM WITH THEE, SAITH THE LORD, TO SAVE THEE:  
THOUGH I MAKE A FULL END OF ALL NATIONS WHITHER I HAVE  
SCATTERED THEE, YET WILL I NOT MAKE A FULL END OF THEE:  
BUT I WILL CORRECT THEE IN MEASURE, AND WILL NOT LEAVE THEE  
ALTOGETHER UNPUNISHED.**

**JEREMIAH 5:10**

**10 GO YE UP UPON HER WALLS, AND DESTROY; BUT MAKE NOT A FULL END:  
TAKE AWAY HER BATTLEMENTS; FOR THEY ARE NOT THE LORD'S.**

**JEREMIAH 32:40**

**40 AND I WILL MAKE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH THEM,  
THAT I WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM THEM, TO DO THEM GOOD;  
BUT I WILL PUT MY FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS, THAT THEY SHALL NOT DEPART  
FROM ME.**

There are several other verses in his writing that says the Lord stated that trouble was ahead, but there would be a restoration at a later time. It was in chapters 39-52 that Jeremiah records the events of the fall of Jerusalem.

**JEREMIAH 25:11-12**

**11 AND THIS WHOLE LAND SHALL BE A DESOLATION, AND AN  
ASTONISHMENT; AND THESE NATIONS SHALL SERVE THE KING OF BABYLON  
SEVENTY YEARS.**

**12 AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, WHEN SEVENTY YEARS ARE  
ACCOMPLISHED, THAT I WILL PUNISH THE KING OF BABYLON, AND THAT  
NATION, SAITH THE LORD, FOR THEIR INIQUITY, AND THE LAND OF THE  
CHALDEANS, AND WILL MAKE IT PERPETUAL DESOLATIONS.**

**JEREMIAH 29:10-15**

**10 FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD, THAT AFTER SEVENTY YEARS BE  
ACCOMPLISHED AT BABYLON I WILL VISIT YOU, AND PERFORM MY GOOD  
WORD TOWARD YOU, IN CAUSING YOU TO RETURN TO THIS PLACE.**

**11 FOR I KNOW THE THOUGHTS THAT I THINK TOWARD YOU, SAITH  
THE LORD, THOUGHTS OF PEACE, AND NOT OF EVIL, TO GIVE YOU AN  
EXPECTED END.**

**12 THEN SHALL YE CALL UPON ME, AND YE SHALL GO AND PRAY UNTO ME,  
AND I WILL HEARKEN UNTO YOU.**

**13 AND YE SHALL SEEK ME, AND FIND ME, WHEN YE SHALL SEARCH FOR ME  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART.**

**14 AND I WILL BE FOUND OF YOU, SAITH THE LORD: AND I WILL TURN AWAY  
YOUR CAPTIVITY, AND I WILL GATHER YOU FROM ALL THE NATIONS, AND  
FROM ALL THE PLACES WHITHER I HAVE DRIVEN YOU, SAITH THE LORD;  
AND I WILL BRING YOU AGAIN INTO THE PLACE WHENCE I CAUSED YOU TO  
BE CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE.**

**15 BECAUSE YE HAVE SAID, THE LORD HATH RAISED US UP PROPHETS IN BABYLON;**

**The Empire of Babylon conquered both Jerusalem and the land of Judah. This completed the exile of both kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. and now the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C. King Zedekiah was captured and his son murdered in his presence just as Jeremiah had predicted. King Zedekiah was then blinded, bound and dragged off to Babylon in captivity.**

**In every case, Jeremiah had been faithful to tell what God had spoken to him whether he was discussing captivity or restoration. Jeremiah was always open with God and told God what he thought about current events—good or bad. Then he would always give God an opportunity to respond.**