

Jeremiah

Original Historical Setting

Author: Jeremiah

Written: Compiled ~585 B.C.

Audience: The people of Judah living during the time of Jeremiah whose influence was between ~626-586 BC

Occasion: To warn the people of Judah and Jerusalem of impending judgment if they did not return to God's Covenant

Timeline:

- 626 BC – Jeremiah called to prophesy
- 608 BC – Jehoiakim begins reign in Judah
- 598 BC – Jehoiachin begins reign in Judah
- 598 BC – Zedekiah begins reign in Judah
- 586 BC – Jerusalem falls to Babylonians
- 585 BC – Jeremiah taken to Egypt

World Events that occur simultaneously

- 612 B.C. – Babylon captures Assyrian capital of Nineveh
- 605 B.C. – Babylon defeats Pharaoh Necho of Egypt
- 600 B.C. – Hinduism teaches reincarnation
- 560 B.C. – Siddhartha Gautama founder of Buddhism born

Genre/Literary style

Prophecies and historical narratives written in a mixture of Hebrew poetry and prose

Key text(s)

- 13:23** – Can a leopard change its spots?
- 17:9** – The heart is deceitful above all things
- 18:6** – Clay in the Potter's hand
- 30:15** – Because your sins have increased I have done these things to you
- 31:33** – I will write My laws on their hearts

Features and Structure

- The book of Jeremiah is not arranged chronologically, but more along the lines of content and audience.
- **Outline**
 - Ch **1** –Jeremiah's commissioning
 - Ch **2-20** –Undated general prophecies to Judah
 - Ch **21-44** –Specific prophecies up to fall of Jerusalem
 - Ch **45-51** –Prophecies to the Gentile nations
 - Ch **52** –Appendix: The fall of Jerusalem

What to look for

- Jeremiah's prophecies both "forth tell" and "foretell."
Note the three classic elements of Hebrew prophecy:
 - 1) a call to people to turn from their sins in the face of divine judgment
 - 2) predictions of near events (such as the fall of Jerusalem)
 - 3) predictions of "far" events (such as the coming of the New Covenant)
- Notice how God had Jeremiah use very visual object lessons and actions such as burying his sash, or wearing a yoke, or avoiding funerals and showing sympathy to the bereaved, all to make a point.

Interesting facts

- Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible composed by one author.
- Jeremiah is known as the "weeping prophet."
- The name Jeremiah ranks 1417 in the list for the most popular names in the U.S between Saad and Horatio.
- To read Pastor Scot's take on Jeremiah Wright's preaching of Black Liberation Theology, go to <http://hcnonline.com/articles/2008/05/05/import/20080505-archive93.txt>

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 31:33