



Getting started with Jeremiah

We all know what it feels like to try and share God's Word with a hostile audience. Spare a thought for Jeremiah – he spoke to a tough crowd!

Jeremiah was God's chosen mouthpiece for the bad news He had for His people. Their spiritual adultery, bad leaders and widespread social injustice meant that God was going to bring judgement on them. They had failed to be faithful to the covenant, and so would experience the promised consequences – **exile.**

Jeremiah, a young man when he started his ministry, faithfully proclaimed this message of warning for 40 years. He witnessed and experienced the very exile he had warned about.

The people had ignored God's loving plea to return (ch2-3) and his warning of judgement (ch4-6), and so Babylon came in two waves – first in 598BC when they took many of the people away and set up a puppet king, and then in 586BC for a more complete devastation of Jerusalem and the temple.

In all this time, and despite the evident truth of what Jeremiah was saying, only two people respond positively – Baruch (ch 36v4) & Ebed-Melech (ch 38v7-13)

Jeremiah's unpopular message was one of judgement and hope, both for the people of Israel but also for the nations.

Structure

Chapters 1-24 – Before the exile

Chapter 25 – transition – Babylon arrives!

Chapters 26-45 – Judgement and hope for Israel

Chapters 46-51 – Judgement and hope for the nations

Chapter 52 – the story of exile (chapters 1-24 fulfilled!)

Things to note

The book of Jeremiah is a collection of different types of writings – poetry, narrative, sermons – possibly collected by Baruch, who certainly wrote down some of what Jeremiah said. (chapter 36v4)

Things do not always happen in chronological order. The material is collected in a way which highlights themes and teaching rather than history – so if you're getting confused it might be because not everything happens one after another!

Jesus in Jeremiah

Through the bleak and tragic picture painted in Jeremiah's prophecy, there is a glimmer of light as restoration is anticipated. There would be a return of God's people, a rebuilding of the temple and glory for the people – a restoration fulfilled in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Watch out for what Jeremiah teaches us about the Messiah.

Jeremiah is a faithful speaker of God's Word despite facing rejection, unfair treatment, persecution and physical pain. This is the pattern for Jesus, and indeed for followers of Jesus.

Jeremiah ends with a glimmer of hope for the captive king – there is hope for David's line – hope that finds its fulfilment in King Jesus.

What does Jeremiah have to do with me?

We are warned of the danger of ignoring God's faithful messenger with His unerring word.

We are challenged about spiritual prostitution – in the way we spend time and affection on things other than God.

We are convicted of the moral problems such as injustice that occur when we fall away from God.

We are pointed to the Lord Jesus as the only hope in the face of deserved judgement.

We are prepared for what it will be like as faithful speakers of God's Word in a world that doesn't want to hear.



RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 9th January

Bring along some things from your reading of
Jeremiah to share with others.

Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at Biblegateway.com
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)