

# BOOK-A-MONTH CLUB

~ August ~

## The Book of Jeremiah with Carol Hurley

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I chose the book of Jeremiah because I think it has many applications for us as individuals and as a nation. We would do well to spend much time learning these lessons and heeding them.

### Background

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah of Anathoth and his prophecies spanned years 626-585. The book was written down by Baruch, his secretary, and is the longest book in the Bible. The book can make for confusing reading because it is not chronological order. The original book was written down and then burned by king Jehoiakim. It was re-written from memory and was not in the same order and additional prophecies were added. Jeremiah was called the “weeping prophet” because he complained about his job as a prophet, asked to be relieved, and many times revealed an anguished spirit because of the people’s lack of response for 23 years. But he was always faithful. He is a great example to us of obedience in spite of circumstances. The details of Jeremiah’s death are uncertain. He probably was stoned to death while in exile in Egypt, or died peacefully after being taken back to Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt.

These are some important dates and the kings/rulers under which Jeremiah prophesied.

- 626 B.C. – Jeremiah was called to be a prophet.
- 640–609 B.C. – Josiah: He was a good king and reformer who tried to bring Judah back to God. The Scroll of Law was discovered in 620. He supported Jeremiah. Egyptians killed him in battle.
- 612 B.C. – Babylonians conquered the Assyrian capital of Ninevah.
- 609 B.C. – Jehoahaz: He ruled for three months after his father was killed. He was deposed by Egypt. His brother, Jehoiakim, replaced him.
- 609–598 B.C. – Jehoiakim: He was openly for idols, and defiant of God. He was a bitter enemy of Jeremiah. He died in 598
- 605 B.C. – Nebuchadnezzar crushes Egyptian armies at Carchemish.
- 597–586 B.C. – Zedekiah: He treated Jeremiah fairly, but was a weak king who gave in to the wicked princes. He was deported to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586.
- Gedaligh: He was appointed governor by Nebuchadnezzar only to be killed by his enemies after serving just three months.

### Theme

God will punish sin but in grace He promises restoration for those who repent.

### Reading Order

It will be helpful to read the book through once in this approximate chronological order:

1-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36, 45, 24, 29, 30, 31, 27, 28, 21, 34, 37, 32, 33, 38–44, 46–52

Then we will look at some major points and questions for further study again in approximate chronological order:

Keep a running log of the sins mentioned in the book here. Are any of them yours?

May we not be like Israel in making excuses for following after the ways of the world, which will only lead to hypocrisy rather than joyous service.

## **Chapter 1**

This chapter contains God's call to Jeremiah as a prophet while in his twenties.

He, like Moses, offered excuses to God in the beginning but as we will see, he served God faithfully in spite of difficult circumstances.

Have you ever hesitated to answer God's call to serve?

Have you too felt inadequate?

What assurances did God give Jeremiah, which you can claim for yourself when He gives you a difficult assignment?

## **Chapter 3:**

Judah is charged as being guiltier than the Northern kingdom of Israel, which had already been destroyed. God called for a change in their hearts, not just ritual return.

What did God promise if they did repent and turn back to Him?

It is the same promise He makes to us in 1 John 1:9.

## **Chapter 7**

Jeremiah again lists more sins of the people. They think they will be safe because surely God would not destroy His temple. They are guilty of hypocrisy, of living one way outside the walls of the temple and then coming in to worship covered with sin.

Do we do the same?

We should tremble and repent at the words of the Lord in verse 11.

## **Chapter 9**

We hear the brokenhearted prophet declaring the words of the Lord.

What kind of things do people today boast in?

What does this passage say about what and who should be the subject of our boasting?

What New Testament verse states the same message?

## **Chapter 10**

This was spoken after Josiah's death. The people further angered God by producing even more idols that they thought could save them from destruction. But again, God promises their destruction. Jeremiah's prayer beginning in verse 17 brings to mind a similar passage in Proverbs. Where is it?

## **Chapters 13, 16, 18, 19, 27, 24, and 32**

The book of Jeremiah contains many passages using symbols in these chapters. The married girdle/linen belt in 13 speaks of a beautiful belt that would be ruined and then cast off. What lesson was he trying to teach Judah?

## **Chapters 14 and 15**

Jeremiah demonstrated the spirit of Christ in his intercession even for those who came against him. The grotto where he retreated to weep is said to be the same place where, 600 years later, Jesus' cross stood. His intercession should be an example to us when people persecute us.

## **Chapter 17:5-9**

Jeremiah says that the Lord will bless those who trust Him and curse those who trust in themselves. There are many passages in Jeremiah that are found again throughout scripture. Should we not pay special attention when the Lord gives us messages repeatedly?

Verses 7 and 8 sound very familiar and are echoed in the Psalms. Where is this passage?

## **Chapter 23**

This is a warning against all false prophets. There is also a beautiful description and prophecy of Jesus. The Lord applied the same shepherd imagery to himself in John 10:7-16. Study Isaiah 11:1-2 for another reading about Jesus as the "righteous branch."

## **Chapter 25**

This chapter reveals a remarkable prophecy of 70 year reign of King Nebuchadnezzar over Judah. Notice this prophecy was given to Jeremiah in the very first year of the king's rule during Jehoiakim's reign. He even accurately describes what will happen to the Babylonian nation after the 70 years.

## **Chapter 36**

We find the explanation of the chronological order issues in this book. The first scroll written down by the directions of the Lord was taken to King Jehoiakim. The king proceeded to have each section cut up and thrown into the fire. Then he tried to seize Jeremiah and Baruch but the Lord hid them. God told Jeremiah to write it again and to add what prophecy?

## **Chapter 29**

There is a prophecy sent to the captives in Babylon after Jehoiakim had left Judah. God wanted to encourage the people by letting them know that after the 70 years of exile they would return. We too need to remember that during a time of "exile" God has not forgotten us. What does the promise in verses 11-13 mean to you?

## **Chapter 31**

There is a prophecy of a new covenant. See Jesus' words on the subject in Luke 22:20. The prophecy in verse 38-40 is amazing, as the city was rebuilt with the exact landmarks and measure 2,500 years later in AD 1935.

## **Chapters 32 and 33**

These chapters were spoken during the tenth year of Zedekiah when Jeremiah was locked up in the court of guards. Read 32:27 and 33:3 and seek what application they have for you. Note that if we are to receive comfort from the Lord and answers, we too must stay constant in prayer.

## **Chapters 46-51**

These passages speak of the consequences for the nations that had come against Judah. God was going to avenge His people and His name. Pay special attention to chapter 48. What were the sins of Moab and are they not the same for America at this time?

**We need to heed this lesson from Jeremiah:**

**Be a people of obedience—obeying the Word of the Lord or we should expect similar judgement.**