

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Bible Survey Lesson 44: The Book of Jeremiah, Part 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Introduction

In the midst of monumental international turmoil, in which three great dynasties collided, God's chosen nation struggled to survive. **Refer to Maps in Lesson 23, II Kings and Chart of Prophets in Lesson 41, Intro to the Prophets.**

The mighty Assyrian Empire succumbed to a young and virile Babylonian, which in turn confronted an old and powerful Egyptian.

--Isaiah lived through the turbulent Assyrian period.

--Jeremiah lived through the equally depressing Babylonian period.

--In Isaiah's time, Israel was carried into captivity.

--In Jeremiah's time Judah suffered the same fate.

--Isaiah served side by side with the godly King Hezekiah and was surrounded by fellow prophets Amos, Hosea, and Micah.

--Jeremiah served with righteous King Josiah and was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah.

Compared to Jeremiah, Isaiah was a popular prophet.

Introducing the Book

The book is named Jeremiah because *he* wrote it (1:1). It is a very personal book, as Jeremiah tells much of his life, ministry, people, troubles, and even shares his personal feelings. No other prophet has revealed as much of himself and his heart.

This book is one of the best documented pieces of Old Testament writing since much of its history, including names, places, and dates is also recorded in the *Babylonian Chronicles* (626-594 B. C.) the *Lachish Letters* and many other tablets found in Babylonian ruins.

For instance, in 1956 tablets from the Chronicles were discovered by D. J. Wiseman stored in the British Museum, which give detailed, first hand accounts of the fall of Jerusalem. If you like archeology there are a number of interesting pages in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, by R. K. Harrison, IVP Press.

You have probably discovered in your reading of the Book of Jeremiah that the chapters are not arranged in chronological order, so it is difficult to make an orderly outline, but I'm going to try.

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The Book of Jeremiah is actually not without order. As R. K. Harrison explains, *"With the exception of the historical appendix (52), the prophecy is either biographic (21-29; 30-39; 40-51) or autobiographic (1-10; 11-20) in nature, and the over-all arrangement of the material made it possible for the grim theme of national sinfulness and judgment to be emphasized time and again in throbbing, poetic, rhythms."*

Introducing the Prophet

Meeting Jeremiah isn't difficult because the first chapter introduces him very well. His father, Hilkiah, was a priest and so he was from the order of Aaron and the tribe of Levi, but we have no record that Jeremiah ever trained for or practiced that office. His knowledge of that position may well have had a lot to do with his reaction to the wholesale disregard for the Law and worship in Judah.

He was born in a small town called Anathoth, about three miles northwest of Jerusalem. His call was determined before his birth (1:5) and he entered into prophetic ministry somewhat reluctantly (1:6) as a very young man, probably between 14 and 20 years of age. (much like Samuel)

He was forbidden to marry, which is explained in chapter 16, and his entire ministry was marked with persecution and trial, but he was faithful, prophesying in Jerusalem, even after Babylon carried most of the people away. He, himself, was eventually carried away to Egypt by force, as explained in chapters 40-45 and possibly died there. *Traditional Jewish writing tells us he was recaptured in Egypt by Babylon in 568 B. C. and lived to finish his writing as late as 561 B. C. and died at age 85 to 90.*

Jeremiah seems to have been a weak man who God had to motivate by sharp threats rather than words of comfort, *but he was loyal*. No matter how weak and whiny he seemed when alone with God, he stood strong before the leaders of his day, whether Judah's or their enemies. Dr. James Gray says, *"when speaking for God, He was as brave as a lion, and commanding as a general in the field."*

J. Sidlow Baxter, in his book *Exploring the Scriptures*, writes this sketch of Jeremiah.

"The man himself is a rich subject for study. He blends in his character, a degree of striking fineness, feminine tenderness with masculine strength, nervous sensitiveness with transparent simplicity, so that his nature reveals its reactions to outside goings-on as sharply as the limpid waters of Alpine lakes reflect every mood of the changeable skies above. I know of no man who reveals a truer heart-likeness to Jesus Himself than does Jeremiah, in his suffering sympathy both with God and man, in his unretaliating forbearance, his yearning concern for his fellows, his guileless motive, his humility, his willingness for self-sacrifice, his utter faithfulness, even to the point of unsparing severity in denunciation."

That's a mouthful. Perhaps I can break it down into three great characteristics for a future sermon:

1. Suffering Sympathy
2. Patient Perseverance

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3. Unfailing Faithfulness

Jeremiah was, by earthly standards, a failure. He wept out his prophecies to people who would not listen. His writings were torn to shreds. His name was disgraced. He was beaten. He was put in stocks, thrown in a pit, and for much of his life he was a hunted man. He lived to see his nation in famine and war and all of his worst predictions came true before his eyes.

When Jeremiah knew Babylon was going to invade and understood that it was God's punishment and could not be avoided, he encouraged Judah, and several other nations not to resist, but rather avoid total devastation. That and a temple address (7:1-8:3) which predicted the destruction of the temple, earned him the ultimate title of "Traitor."

Even when King Josiah led in a religious revival, he could see it would not last among a people steeped in corruption and idolatry. When Josiah died, he barely escaped arrest, was forbidden to enter the temple, and had to have his scribe, Baruch, deliver his prophecies.

He is often called the "weeping prophet," and his bitterest heartache was poured out in his other book, Lamentations, which means "loud cry."

Jeremiah reminds me of Peter. He is very human, very much like most of us, and God's patience, mercy and grace to him is a great lesson in how He uses the weak to confound the strong.

Author

This will be short and sweet since the information is parallel to that introducing the prophet himself. There is no doubt who wrote it because of verse 1:1 which says, "*The words of Jeremiah, . . .*" His name means, "The Lord throws down, or lays down, a foundation." So, I suppose you could view it as the Lord throwing down the gauntlet, or the Lord laying a foundation for His future activity.

There are three basic types of writing: poetic sayings; biographical prose; and prose speeches. This leads some to believe three people wrote the book. There is, however, a remarkable coherence in the language and thought patterns of the original manuscripts leaving little doubt that Jeremiah wrote it all.

The major debate comes, again, from those critics needing a late date to help them eliminate supernatural prophecy from the picture. But in the book Baruch himself said, "*Jeremiah dictated all these words to me, while I inscribed them with ink on the scroll during the fourth year of Jehoiakim (604 B. C.)*" (36:18) Of course, Jehoiakim destroyed the scroll, but it was re-written with added material shortly after (36:32).

Introducing the Times

To place Jeremiah in his proper place in history we must refer to II Kings 21-25 and II Chronicles 34-36. You remember that II Kings records the lowest point in Hebrew history.

The tragic end of that tragic time is the setting for the Book of Jeremiah. They are on a "slippery slope" to destruction.

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The last king in Judah during Isaiah's time was Hezekiah, one of the best kings ever. His son, Manasseh and his grandson Amon, however, were both evil men who encouraged gross idolatry including child sacrifice to Molech.

Jeremiah was also combating hypocrisy, dishonesty, adultery, injustice, and tyranny against the helpless for over forty years.

The world power, Assyria, had just carried Israel, the northern tribes, into captivity and had also threatened Judah for a long time, even capturing or destroying many of their cities. It was only by the grace of God, and His supernatural intervention that Jerusalem was spared. Remember the ministry of Isaiah and the intercession of Hezekiah had much to do with that.

When eight-year-old Josiah followed Amon to the throne, bringing over thirty years of revival and righteous rule, Judah was already a virtual vassal province of Assyria. Babylon led by King Nabopolassar, finally overpowered Assyria in 609 B. C. and they inherited the rights to Judah and determined to capture its capital, Jerusalem.

Judah had become a buffer state between Egypt and Babylon, so whatever happened, there would be war and devastation from both sides.

In fact, King Josiah died at Megiddo trying to stop the Egyptian army from crossing Judah to help Assyria in a battle in Carchemish. He was succeeded by his sons:

First Jehoahaz, who lasted only three months before he was deposed by Pharaoh Necho.

Then Necho placed Josiah's other son, Johoiakim, in as a puppet ruler who reigned for eleven years. (609-598 B. C.) It was under his rule that the transfer of power to Babylon occurred and he paid tribute, first to Assyria, then to Egypt, and then to Babylon. Johoiakim, an evil idolater, was a bitter enemy of Jeremiah.

Sometime later, Jehoiakim stopped paying tribute and declared Judah's independence. In response, Babylon captured Jerusalem, not destroying it, but carrying some of their top citizens into captivity (March 15 and 16, 597 B. C.). Among this first group of captives was Daniel and his three friends. Jehoiachin succeeded his father to the throne, but within three months, Babylon removed him from power and placed Zedekiah (his uncle) in his place. They thought Zedekiah would be more controllable.

That was a mistake, because Zedekiah carried on a series of conspiracies against Babylon for over eleven years, which finally led to the violent overthrow of him and his kingdom. The book of Lamentations is a record of this time. Jerusalem was flattened, the temple sacked and burned, Zedekiah was captured, blinded, and deported to Babylon with many of his people, and surprisingly, Jeremiah was freed.

All of this comprised the initiating events leading to the period known throughout history as the *Babylonian Captivity in 586 B. C.*

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Lessons

Since prophetic books often deal with specific periods of history and are often written to a specific audience, it is not always easy to find lessons for our lives in a cursory reading. Of course there are the usual suspects:

1. People who give their allegiance to God need to keep their promises.
2. Disobedience and rebellion always lead to apostasy and idolatry.
3. Corrupt leadership corrupts a nation. Morals do count.
4. Justice ignored brings God's judgment.
5. God will keep His promises. He will restore His exiled people and He will restore a Davidic Throne ruling over a promised land and will provide a Messiah King to ensure peace and justice in that land.
6. Sin and disobedience bring consequences.

I have tried to find a couple that I can really apply to my life right now, even this week. Here are two I found:

1. We are unable to make or keep ourselves righteous!

Though time, nations, covenants, and circumstances change, the bottom line is constant--

There is no conceivable way a man is able to create, preserve, or recover his integrity or save himself from corruption. Our entire hope, our only hope, is the intervention of a supernatural power outside ourselves.

Only God intervening in our affairs, by His divine providence, and only the Holy Spirit bringing a supernatural change in our very nature can make us and keep us righteous.

2. All righteousness is rooted in a relationship!

G. Campbell Morgan put it this way:

"The Bible shows that all righteousness is rooted in religion. If we destroy man's relationship to God, and his consciousness of Him, we destroy the possibility of man's right relationship to life and his fellow man. That is what the world has lost sight of so largely. Perhaps it may come back through blood and misery and tears in some future appalling days."

Homework:

1. Read: Or re-read the Book of Jeremiah
2. Think: Am I presuming that God is protecting me even though I am not living in the Spirit?
3. Apply: Start each day this week asking God to help you to really desire a daily personal relationship with Him.

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Bible Survey Lesson 45: The Book of Jeremiah

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Preface

The Book of Jeremiah is not written in a style that lends itself to easy outlining. It is not presented chronologically nor topically and therefore does not break into natural sections. If you want fairly efficient outlines, which follow the book chapter by chapter, you may find the ones in John MacArthur's or Charles Ryrie's Study Bibles to be helpful. *I did not.*

I have chosen to outline Jeremiah by the type of ministry of the prophet.

He used, whether he wanted to or not, three basic methods of conveying God's message: Signs; Sufferings; and Sermons.

Introduction

The first chapter of Jeremiah gives us a background for the entire book:

1. *It includes the context*, --who the prophet was and in what period of history he lived and ministered. (1-4)
2. *It includes the call*, --he was chosen before he was born and called when very young. (5-10)
3. *It includes his challenge* --he was commissioned to prophesy to the nation of Judah and emphasize that the message was one of impending bitter judgment which would bring him personal persecution and pain. (11-16)
4. *It includes his charge*, --to declare God's message boldly and fearlessly, depending on His protection, ". . . they will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you . . ." (17-19)

I. MESSAGES OF SINS (Chapters 2-12)

These chapters contain several oracles (pronouncements from God) that rightly accuse Judah of willful disobedience and apostasy. The subject of these messages is their coming destruction and how they deserve judgment, yet there is a thread of hope for future renewal.

A. Judah's Willful Sin (2-6)

1. Reasons for Judgment

Earlier Israel had faithfully followed the Lord and enjoyed His protection. Now they had forgotten Him and turned to pagan idols. Even the priests, leaders, and prophets had fallen. (2)

The Lord compared Judah to a prostitute and a good grapevine grown wild with no hope short of punishment. The people accused the Lord of being unfair and He responded that **they were even worse than Israel** (already in exile for their sins). (3)

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He called them to confession with promises of blessing if they would repent and return. (3)

2. Form of Judgment

The alternative to repentance was judgment in the form of a mighty army *"from the north"* which would bring terror and destruction to the land. (4)

Just to make it clear Jeremiah reviews the reasons for the impending judgment. Disobedience, rebellion, idolatry, immorality, exploitation of the poor, all things God hates. (5)

Even in the face of a graphic and terrifying depiction of the coming attack and siege, the people refuse to respond, and God says, *"They, all of them, are corrupt."* (v 29) (6)

B. Judah's Wrong Religion (7-10)

1. Hypocrisy

The people thought they were safe because the temple was in their capital city--WRONG--There was no magic power in the Ark of the Covenant in the wilderness and there's none in the temple building. The "Temple Sermon" would set them straight on that fact. (7)

Not only do they play at worshiping the True God in the temple, but they also worship pagan gods with perverse rituals. Having the Law and living the Law are quite different, and so the Lord will bring judgment on the people. (8 and 9)

2. Stupidity

God sends a message comparing their silly idols with the Lord.

"There is none like Thee, O Lord; Thou art great, and great is Thy name in might. Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? Indeed it is your due!" (10)

Jeremiah can hardly stand it as he watches them reject the message. *" . . . the shepherds have become stupid and have not sought the Lord; . . . "* (v 21)

C. Judah's Wandering Heart (11-13)

1. Judah Abandons God

The fact is, Judah had turned its back on the Lord. They had broken the covenant. The covenant relationship between Israel and their God had been restated over and over, and again they chose to follow other gods instead. That alone was a sufficient breach of the covenant to bring curses upon them. (11)

The people turned violently on Jeremiah and God vows to protect him, but warns him *"you ain't seen nothin' yet."*

2. God Abandons Judah

God reacted by abandoning Judah and allowing their enemies to desolate their land, *but* He promised to reclaim them and punish their enemies as well. (12)

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II. MESSAGES BY SIGNS (Selected Chapters)

The first type of messages we will consider are object lessons, parables or messages by sign. By using visual aids the Lord hoped to bring his message to the people with impact and power, helping them obey them and remember them. The meanings of the signs are not always easy to dig out or understand, but we'll take a stab at it.

A. Sign of the Linen Belt (13:1-27)

God instructed Jeremiah to buy, wear, and then bury a linen waistband by the Euphrates River. Many days later he had the prophet dig up the belt, which was now rotten and worthless.

Just as a man wore a fine decorative belt to bring glory and compliments to him, God intended His people to be a source of glory and honor to him. But their pride, stubbornness, wallowing in the mire and hypocrisy would bring rot and ruin to them just as the moist ground had rotted and ruined the belt.

Is there much hope that they will change? *"Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard his spots. Then you also can do good who are accustomed to do evil."* (v. 23) --**Not much chance!**

B. Sign of the Drought (14-15)

Jeremiah lamented over a severe drought which engulfed the land and prayed a prayer of confession and request for aid. The Lord responded by pointing to the wickedness rampant in the land and refusing to accept their hypocritical sacrifices.

Jeremiah continued to intercede, but it was "too little, too late." God responded that even Moses or Samuel interceding couldn't help. The sins of perverse idolatry, introduced by King Manasseh years before, were still being practiced and that meant famine, death, and exile would sweep the land. (14)

Jeremiah questioned God's dependability, but God in His grace assured him of continued Divine protection. He confessed his sins of doubt and continued his difficult mission. (15)

C. Sign of the Unmarried Prophet (16:1-17:18)

The restrictions that God placed on Jeremiah foreshadowed the events of the coming judgment to Judah. His aloneness, which in the Hebrew world was a big deal or even a curse, would illustrate the devastating effect of the coming events on families. Many were going to lose husbands, wives, and children.

He was also restricted from attending funerals or celebrations to illustrate that there would not be time or chance to mourn or celebrate, such would be the scope of the disasters. (16)

Again, the message points out the why. Idolatry and wickedness would bring forfeit of the Promised Land, death, and slavery. God contrasts the wicked and the righteous, reminding them that the righteous remnant would be blessed even in the midst of the crisis.

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Jeremiah prayed again, calling on God's omniscience and justice, re-affirming his commitment to his task and asking for vindication before his persecutors. (17)

D. Sign of the Potter's House (18-19:13)

The Lord sent Jeremiah to a potter's house for an object lesson that illustrated His ultimate control over Judah. As the potter was shaping the pot, it was marred so the potter just reshaped the marred pot into a different style pot (Probably for a different use.)

"Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as a potter does?" declares the Lord, "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hands . . ." (v 6)

God is willing to reshape the pot according to the peoples' response.

If they continue to rebel He will allow that marring to bring a reshaping by judgment, forming them for another purpose. If they repent, He is more than willing to reshape them into a useful vessel. (18)

As an addendum to that sign message, God had Jeremiah go to the potter's house, buy a earthenware jar and deliver it to the elders and some of the senior priests. Next, he was to take them to the Valley of Ben Himmon, proclaim a prophecy of judgment for their child-sacrificing idolatry, and then smash the jar illustrating God's plan for the city of Jerusalem is presented next. (19)

E. Sign of the Figs (24)

After the exile of Jehoiachin in 557 B. C., the Lord gave Jeremiah this object lesson. God showed him two baskets of figs. *"One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs; and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten due to rotteness."* (v. 2)

The good figs represented the early deportees who were already in exile in Babylon. God was committed to protect them and restore them to the land. The bad figs represented the evil Zedekiah and his officials who were still in Jerusalem or had fled to Egypt. God was committed to humiliating them and eventually destroying them.

F. Sign of the Yokes (27-28)

Early in Zedekiah's reign Jeremiah stood against the false prophets who were preaching hope and peace. He followed God's instruction and placed a oxen yoke over his neck to illustrate that the promised slavery was coming.

The bottom line of this prophecy was Jeremiah's advice to Judah to submit to the inevitable conquest of King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. The basis for this advice was the God-given knowledge that, this time, God was going to let him win. His point was, since it is going to happen anyway, why not save lives by surrendering rather than go through an attack and deadly siege. (27)

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Now, **Jeremiah became a traitor as well as a voice of doom.** At the same time, a false prophet, Hananiah, confronted Jeremiah in the temple declaring that within two years God would deliver Judah.

Hananiah removed the yoke and broke it (His own object lesson.), but Jeremiah stated that the yoke God had placed on Judah was an unbreakable yoke of iron. Then, just as a prophet test, he predicted Hananiah would die within the year and he did. (28)

G. Sign of the Field of Hanameel (32:6-44)

When Jeremiah's cousin Hanameel came to visit , Jeremiah, following God's instructions redeemed his field according to the ancient law (Lev. 25). When he asked God why He told him to do that, knowing Babylon was going to own it all anyway.

God's response was, *"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me? . . . I am about to give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon."* (vv 27-28)

But, God explained, *"Behold, I will gather them out of the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety."* (v 37)

H. Sign of the Rechabites (35)

During the reign of Johoiakim, the Lord had Jeremiah invite a Rachabite family to the temple for a wine and cheese party. The Rachabites were descendants of Jonadab, a zealous man of God and an opponent of Baal worship (II Kings 10). For over 200 years the family had obeyed their ancestors instructions to live an ascetic life-style including total abstinence. When Jeremiah placed the wine before them, they still refused.

The lesson was clear. The Rachabite's obedience stood in stark contrast to the disobedience of Judah. They would obey 200 years after their instruction, while Judah wouldn't even obey the Lord's living prophets. It was just one more argument in favor of justice being served.

III. MESSAGES BY SUFFERINGS (Selected Chapters)

The second type of messages are messages from experience. In these passages Jeremiah and/or Judah are taught lessons through events which make it clear that God is sovereign and orchestrating history.

A. Jeremiah in Stocks (19:14-20:18)

After breaking the jar before the leaders of Judah, Jeremiah went to the temple and delivered another pronouncement of coming-judgment. Pashur, the priest and chief officer, had him beaten and put in stocks for public humiliation. When released, Jeremiah renamed him Magor-Missabib, meaning "terror on every side," and predicted that he would witness death and exile of his friends and be buried in a foreign land. (19) He did and he was!

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Jeremiah considered himself in a no-win situation. If he spoke the prophecy he was persecuted and if he did not the message burned within him and he couldn't keep still. (20)

B. Uriah Murdered (26:20-24)

Jeremiah was fortunate to have God protecting him when He prophesied the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. At the same time he was spared from the threat of the mob in the temple, one of his fellow prophets, Uriah, was extradited to Egypt and killed by King Jehoiakim.

C. Jeremiah in Prison (32:1-5)

The army of Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem (588 B. C.) and Zedekiah locked Jeremiah in the guardhouse to keep him from influencing the people not to fight. He was again protected by God and lived to prophesy another day

D. Jeremiah's Prophecy Destroyed (36)

The Lord instructed Jeremiah to record all His prophecies on a scroll. He dictated them to Baruch, his scribe, and had him take them to the temple on an official fast day and read them to the people. Word got back to King Jehoiakim, and he personally cut the scroll into pieces and burned it. He next ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch, but they went into hiding, writing another copy of the prophecies.

E. Jeremiah in Prison, Again (37-39)

This and the following events happened in the final days of Judah's freedom. Zedekiah became Jeremiah's main nemesis.

Later, during the siege, the Babylonian main force left to face an attack by Judah's ally, Egypt. Jeremiah told the king that this rest was only temporary and that Babylon would repel Egypt and then destroy Jerusalem. Zedekiah again arrested him, this time for treason, and sentenced him to a long stay in the deep dungeon. Eventually he was brought back to the king to report, but since God's word had not changed he was sent to the guardhouse. (37-38)

The siege was successful and in 586 B. C. Jerusalem fell. Zedekiah ran but was captured and Nebuchadnezzar had his sons killed before him (last sight he would remember), and had him blinded. (39)

F. Jeremiah in Jerusalem (43:1-7)

The Babylonians sacked and destroyed Jerusalem, taking most of its population into exile, leaving only the old, weak, and poor. Our hero was given the option of going to Babylon or staying with the misfits in Jerusalem. He chose to stay and minister to the remnant left in Judah.

IV. MESSAGES BY SERMONS (Selected Chapters)

The third type of messages we will consider are the sermons. These are clear and concise words from God to the audience, and include messages of warning, prediction, and encouragement.

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A. Re: Sabbath (17:19-27)

This sermon was aimed at exhorting the whole nation to repent and demonstrate their loyalty to God by observing the Sabbath.

B. Re: Restoration (23)

This sermon chides the civic and spiritual leaders for being evil shepherds who misled and misfed their people. They will be punished severely and God Himself will provide a better shepherd.

*"Behold, the days are coming. . . when I shall raise up of David a righteous branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He is called, **The Lord, our righteousness.**"* (vv. 5 and 6) One day Messiah, Himself, will reign over Israel.

C. Re: Captivity (25)

This sermon reminds the people of their sin, the severity and duration of the judgment. ". . . *this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*" (v 11) Seventy years of missed Sabbaths brings seventy years of captivity.

By the way, someone was listening. It was this prophecy that alerted the prophet Daniel to the fact that his people's punishment was coming to an end and was the foundation for his prayers.

D. Re: Deportees (29)

This sermon was in a letter written to the captives already in Babylon. He encouraged them to settle down, marry, have kids, and pray for prosperity as they waited to return in seventy years.

E. Re: Jacob's Trouble (30)

This sermon talks of the return of Judah and Israel to "the Land" following great judgment. It applies to more than just then, however, and defines the great tribulation to come just before the Messiah comes to set up the kingdom. We know this, because verse 9 speaks of the "New David," The Messiah who will be king.

F. Re: Last Days (31)

That sermon continues as chapter 31 carries on the theme culminating in a glorious promise of a new covenant and a new prosperity, in a New Kingdom, in which Jerusalem would be rebuilt and never again destroyed.

G. Re: Millennium (33)

The sermon continues with a reaffirmation of the Davidic covenant which included: a promised land in peace and prosperity; a permanent throne of David in Jerusalem; and a king from the tribe of Judah in the line of David on that throne.

This is the Millennium kingdom with the Messiah on the throne.

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H. Re: Remnant (41-42)

This sermon was delivered to the poor remnant left behind in Jerusalem as their fellow countrymen went into bondage. He encouraged them to stay and work the land and assured them of God's favor and protection, that Babylon would treat them mercifully, and their people would return.

I. Re: Baruch (45:1-5)

The last message from Jeremiah was a personal encouragement to his scribe, Baruch. It advised him not to seek a high post in the government since the land was to be judged, and assured him that the Lord would take care of him throughout the coming storm.

V. MESSAGES OF SORROWS (Chapters 46-52)

The concluding section of the Book of Jeremiah is a summary of the judgments to come against all nations involved in this historical era:

First, the enemy nations surrounding, hounding and warring against Israel and Judah, even though they were God's own instruments of discipline, will still be judged. *"And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* --Gen. 12:3

Second, Jerusalem was judged because of the long standing idolatry and apostasy of its rulers, priests, and people.

A. Prophecy Against Neighbors (46-51)

1. Conquests of Babylon (46-49)

One by one the enemies of God and his people will fall. A list that reads like the Who's Who of mighty nations:

Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus (Syria), Arabia, and Elam. All will bite the dust under God's hand.

2. Collapse of Babylon (50-51)

Last, but not least, the great world-conquering power falls as well, and the mighty idol, Marduk would be unable to help.

The description of the Babylonians reeling as drunkards and slaughtered like sheep accurately describes that fateful night when Belshazzar and his nobles partied with the implements from God's temple and were helpless to stop Cyrus as he diverted the river and entered the city to defeat them.

B. Prophecy Against Jerusalem (52)

This chapter is a parallel of the account in II Kings 24 and 25. It gives a detailed account of the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon and confirms the message of Jeremiah. It is also the reason we have Jeremiah's lament in our next book.

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Lesson

1. The detailed fulfillment of prophecy is a major proof that the Bible is a super-natural and trustworthy book.
2. God is longsuffering and full of mercy, but on-going sin will lead to just punishment.
3. God is sovereign in this world and can use whatever and whomever He chooses as His instrument of discipline.
4. God is eager to save His people and has a wonderful ultimate plan for His Hebrew nation and for His church.
5. Abundant life is brought by obedience and a personal love relationship with God, not by worship ritual or circumstance.

Homework:

Read: Read the Book of Lamentations

Think: Are there areas of failure in my life that drive me to God in true confession and repentance?

Apply: This week ask God to keep you obedient so that you are free to serve Him and His discipline is unnecessary.