

JEREMIAH

Written by Jeremiah

-events span his 40 year ministry from 627 to 586 B.C.

Written mainly to the southern kingdom (Judah) during their decline and fall

Jeremiah had the task of standing alone for God among his own people

Not only does Jeremiah announced the coming destruction of Judah, he also foretells of the new covenant God would make with His people

-religion would no longer be national, but individual and spiritual.

The book opens with God calling Jeremiah into ministry

-God tells him

Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

-this should bring such peace to many people who question their worth

-I know a man who found out his mom had planned on having him aborted

-he constantly struggles with feeling worthless, like he was a mistake

-According to God, that is not true

-regardless of the circumstances of how you were conceived or born, you didn't catch God by surprise

-not only did He know you before you were born, but even before you were conceived in your mother's womb

-The next several chapters describe the fallen state of Judah

-and the coming invasion and destruction of Jerusalem

-then in ch. 17:9 He says something pretty sobering

Jer 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

-this isn't just true of the Israelites, it describes us all

-if you don't believe me, just think about all the places your mind goes

-I used to think that mankind is good at their core

-that people inherently want to do good

-I know now that that is not the truth

-you don't have to teach a child to be selfish

-or to lie or fight

- you have to teach them not to do evil
- we are all born with the same sin nature

-although Jesus makes us into a new creation, this we are still stuck in a sinful body

- the Christian life isn't a plateau
 - you won't "arrive" one day and be able to kick back
- No matter how long you walk with the Lord, you will always struggle with the desires of the flesh until you get to heaven

-Chuck Swindoll told a story one day about being out of town on a business trip one night

- he had to stay in a hotel by himself
- when he checked in, he asked the clerk to cut off all the adult channels in his room
- the clerk asked "Oh' are you concerned about your children?"
- He said "No, I'm concerned about the child inside of me!"

Even Paul, of all people struggled with this

Rom 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

Rom 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

Rom 7:16 But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

Rom 7:17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Rom 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

Rom 7:19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

Rom 7:20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Rom 7:21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

Rom 7:22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

Rom 7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Rom 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

-so when we find ourselves struggling with sin, remember, it happens to everyone

- the key is to not give in to it

-that's why Paul says

Gal 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

Gal 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

Gal 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

-there is a big difference between struggling with a sin and practicing it

Ch. 23

-are dreams from the Lord?

-I spoke of the dream I had in our study of Isaiah

-although the dream was powerful, I would never consider it a new revelation from God

Look at v. 25-28

Jer 23:25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!'

Jer 23:26 "How long? Is there *anything* in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even *these* prophets of the deception of their own heart,

Jer 23:27 who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal?

Jer 23:28 "The prophet who has a dream may relate *his* dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have *in common* with grain?" declares the LORD

-There have been local people in recent years that have had dreams concerning church and their spiritual lives

-they shared these dreams with others and took them as direct messages from God

-I'm not saying that God doesn't speak to people through dreams

-only that the dreams don't pull rank on scripture

-some of these people went on to damage relationships they had with people for years

Paul said to the Colossians:

Col 2:18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

Col 2:19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

Ch. 27

-Nebuchadnezzar

-we will discuss him more in the book of Daniel

-He was a cruel, murderous king of Babylon

- he was responsible for thousands of deaths, leading the Jews into exile, and was probably one of the most evil kings in history
- also the one who though he was a god and demanded that everyone bow to his statue
- and had Daniel's three friends thrown into the fire

Listen to how God refers to him

Jer 27:5 "I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight.

Jer 27:6 "Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him.

- as we will see in Daniel, God extends His grace even to one such as him

Ch. 31

Jeremiah prophesies of a new covenant

Jer 31:31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

Jer 31:32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

Jer 31:33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

- you can take 2 people and put them on a desert island from birth
 - even if they never have contact with another person, there are certain things they will know
 - they will know right from wrong
 - that it would be wrong to kill each other
 - or to steal from each other
 - even if they decide to do these things, they will know they are wrong
- without ever opening a bible, everyone knows right from wrong
 - the only way that is possible is because God has written His law on our hearts

The people get tired of Jeremiah's prophesies

- they throw him into a muddy cistern and leave him to die
- an Ethiopian eunuch asks King Zedekiah to spare his life
- he does and the king asks him to prophesy for him
- he says he will as long as his life is spared

-he does and winds up living in Jerusalem until it got captured by Nebuchadnezzar

Jeremiah closes with the fall of Jerusalem

- Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to it for 1 ½ years and finally overtakes it
- King Zedekiah is captured
 - his sons are killed before him
 - his eyes are gouged out and he is imprisoned until his death
- the temple treasures are plundered, the temple is burned and the people are taken into exile

Jesus types:

Jer 23:5 "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.

Jer 23:6 "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'