

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

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“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. (20:9) But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. (31:31) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Jer. 18:6; 20:9; 31:31-34.

I would like to begin a new study for our adult Sunday School class. I have chosen the book of Jeremiah which is my favorite book in the Old Testament. I love this book, because I love the perseverance and faithfulness of Jeremiah, if I put myself in his shoes, humanly speaking, my own heart tells me I would have quit. Of course from God's prospective He would have sustain and kept me to continue. You see, even when he felt like giving up, Jeremiah by the power of God in Holy Conviction cemented in heavenly grace stayed the course and continued regardless of the response of the people. In chapter 1 which we shall see in more detail, but when Jeremiah somewhat objected to his call in verse 6 the LORD answered him in verses 7-10, *“Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. 7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. 8 **Be not afraid of their faces:** for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. 9 **Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.** 10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, **to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.**”*

What a calling, yea what a tremendous responsibility to God and to man. God encourages him at the end of the chapter in verse 17-19, *“Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. 18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. 19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.”* When he got discouraged and was ready to throw in the white towel GRACE PREVAILED and he utters that precious verse I have at times wept over in Jeremiah 20:9, *“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”* I cannot convey to

you the experience that the minister of God feels within his soul when he cries out like Jeremiah, "...his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

The calling of Jeremiah was no doubt very difficult especially in the chaotic time in which he lived; there was no leadership from the time after King Josiah. There was no one blowing the trumpet, there was nothing but political, social and immoral turmoil. From The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible, (From here on POSB) "*Immorality, lawlessness, violence and injustice flooded society. The spirit of unrighteous behavior was uncontrollable. People defied, denied and cursed God. People did what they wanted. They pursued the lusts of the flesh and the covetous ways of the world. They ignored God's Holy commandments and refused to heed the warnings of coming judgment.*" This is the social climate of Jeremiah's era. But in the midst of this dark and wicked time of a confused nation one man stood firmly with Godly uncompromising conviction and with a righteous word to warn and lead the people. Jeremiah would boldly declare, "Thus saith the LORD," to the people with a firm and fixed heart fortified in a Holy zeal, seasoned with a GODLY principle and being fully persuaded that the Living and True God had sent him with the message he preached! This no doubt was the man for that perilous time.

You can't help reading through Jeremiah and shaking your head as he warns them over and over and over again of impending doom except they repent and seek the LORD. Jeremiah's message is also the message for our day because we live in the same condition of irreligious immorality under the umbrella of Christianity, God help us! Who was God speaking through Jeremiah? God was speaking to HIS PEOPLE! In case you don't believe me look at these 45 verses addressed to God's people in 52 chapters.

I inserted all these verses so that you could grasp and understand what an immense responsibility Jeremiah had in communicating God's WORD to them. No doubt there was a lot of thunder, but there were also glimpses of sunshine (Son-shine) also. There might have been much DOOM but it was seasoned in HOPE of DELIVERANCE by a merciful, compassionate and longsuffering God! Why? Because our Great God many of times in wrath remembers MERCY!

- Jeremiah 2:13, For ***my people*** have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.
- Jeremiah 2:31, O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say ***my people***, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?
- Jeremiah 2:32, Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet ***my people*** have forgotten me days without number.
- Jeremiah 4:11, At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of ***my people***, not to fan, nor to cleanse.

- Jeremiah 4:22, For **my people** is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.
- Jeremiah 5:26, For among **my people** are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.
- Jeremiah 5:31, The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and **my people** love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?
- Jeremiah 6:14, They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of **my people** slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.
- Jeremiah 6:26, O daughter of **my people**, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.
- Jeremiah 6:27, I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among **my people**, that thou mayest know and try their way.
- Jeremiah 7:12, But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of **my people** Israel.
- Jeremiah 7:23, But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be **my people**: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.
- Jeremiah 8:7, Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but **my people** know not the judgment of the LORD.
- Jeremiah 8:11, For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of **my people** slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.
- Jeremiah 8:19, Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of **my people** because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?
- Jeremiah 8:21, For the hurt of the daughter of **my people** am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.
- Jeremiah 8:22, Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of **my people** recovered?
- Jeremiah 9:1, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of **my people**!
- Jeremiah 9:2, Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave **my people**, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.
- Jeremiah 9:7 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of **my people**?
- Jeremiah 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be **my people**, and I will be your God:
- Jeremiah 12:14 Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused **my people** Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.
- Jeremiah 12:16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of **my people**, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught **my people** to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of **my people**.
- Jeremiah 14:17 Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of **my people** is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.
- Jeremiah 15:7 And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will

destroy **my people**, since they return not from their ways.

- Jeremiah 18:15 Because **my people** hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;
- Jeremiah 23:2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed **my people**; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.
- Jeremiah 23:13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused **my people** Israel to err.
- Jeremiah 23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused **my people** to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.
- Jeremiah 23:27 Which think to cause **my people** to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.
- Jeremiah 23:32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause **my people** to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.
- Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be **my people**, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.
- Jeremiah 29:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for **my people**, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.
- Jeremiah 30:3 For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of **my people** Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.
- Jeremiah 30:22 And ye shall be **my people**, and I will be your God.
- Jeremiah 31:1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be **my people**.
- Jeremiah 31:14 And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and **my people** shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.
- Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be **my people**.
- Jeremiah 32:38 And they shall be **my people**, and I will be their God:
- Jeremiah 33:24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised **my people**, that they should be no more a nation before them.
- Jeremiah 50:6 **my people** hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.
- Jeremiah 51:45 **my people**, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Again, there was a lot of thunder, but there were also glimpses of sunshine (Son-shine) also. There might have been much DOOM but it was seasoned in HOPE of DELIVERANCE by a merciful, compassionate and longsuffering God! Why? Because our Great God many of times in wrath remembers MERCY! What a blessing when you think

about it, you see God could have left them where they were, but in his mercy and goodness HE sent them a TRUE PROPHET to warn and to heal His People, God did not have to, but in mercy HE DID! Jeremiah 3:15, “*And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*” If you name the name of Christ this morning aren’t you glad that GOD did not leave you where you were, but sent someone to speak to you about Christ. Again, I can imagine how many times Jeremiah was cast down, but he persevered because of His passion and love for God and for the passion and love that he also had for his hearers. Perhaps now you can better understand why they call him the WEEPING PROPHET. We need more like him in our DAY, oh, may our Great God, be pleased to raise godly and weeping prophets and send them to our rebellious and immoral lawless society!

When you read in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 regarding the perilous times to come which could already be here, it seems no different than Jeremiah’s time or Noah’s time, “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*”

Whatever time we lived in we need GOD ORDAINED prophets who will preach with a holy boldness, “Thus SAITH the LORD!” This again was the man JEREMIAH, a GOD SENT PROPHET interested in GLORIFYING GOD and not man! Let’s consider more things about this precious book:

I. The Author of the Book of Jeremiah:

This prophecy of Jeremiah derives its name from its author, the prophet Jeremiah. There is internal and external support for Jeremiah’s authorship. We see where Jeremiah received the prophecies directly from God. Notice the following verses in the first 2 chapters alone:

- Jeremiah 1:1 & 2, “***The words of Jeremiah*** the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin ***To whom the word of the LORD came*** in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.”
- Jeremiah 1:4, “Then ***the word of the LORD came unto me***, saying.”
- Jeremiah 1:11, “Moreover ***the word of the LORD came unto me***, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.”
- Jeremiah 1:13, “And ***the word of the LORD came unto me*** the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.”
- Jeremiah 2:1, “Moreover ***the word of the LORD came to me***, saying.”

There are more verses like these in Jeremiah that substantiate and supports the internal

authorship, but we also have the external support.

- Daniel was a contemporary of Jeremiah and makes mention of him in Daniel 9:2, “*In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, **whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet**, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” (Jer. 25:11-14 & 29:10-14)*
- In the New Testament in Matthew 2:16-18) “*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by **Jeremy the prophet**, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” (Jer.31:15)*
- Matthew 21:13 & Mark 11:17, “*And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” (Jer.7:11 & Isaiah 56:7)*
- 1 Cor. 1:31, “*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” Jer.9:23& 24.*
- Hebrews 8:8-13, “*For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Jer.31:31-33.*

Therefore we have internal and external evidence for Jeremiah as its author. Now because there are some areas which are not arranged chronologically causes some to question Jeremiah’s authorship. We’ll see later how some things are not in chronological order, but interesting to note the name of Jeremiah is mentioned in 34 chapters for a total of about 132 times. The prophecy in Jeremiah 36 clearly shows his authorship as we have the account of Jeremiah dictating to Baruch, all that, he had spoken in the name of the Lord. Let’s turn there because when that copy was destroyed 36:21-23, God gave instruction again in verses 27-32, the second copy was just as inspired as the first copy, verse 32 “*Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah **all the words of the book** which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and **there were added besides unto them many like words**.” I’m sure there were other places that Jeremiah also dictated to Baruch. Even chapter 52 was written as an historical appendix which poses no problem even though Jeremiah was in Egypt during the account of*

chapter 52, yet God by divine inspiration gave the words to Jeremiah and dictated to his scribe so it could be included in the book.