

# INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH #4

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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. The Author.**

We've seen that Jeremiah is the author of this book by both internal and external evidence.

## **II. The Life, Call and Ministry of Jeremiah.**

Jeremiah preached faithfully for 40 years as he pleaded with great passion, preaching with fervency and tears for the people to repent and turn to God or else facing awful doom and judgment. We saw that in spite all the preaching no one took heed to his message.

## **III. The Date.**

The third point of our outline in our introduction is the date of Jeremiah's writing. Jeremiah prophesized and ministered during the reign of 5 kings. Jeremiah began his ministry in the 13<sup>th</sup> of Josiah reign around 627 BC.

The Dates of the Kings of Judah during Jeremiah's preaching:

640-609 B.C. Josiah's Reign, a godly king.

609 B.C. (3 mos) Jehoahaz reign 3 months, wicked king.

608-598 B.C. (11 yrs) Jehoiachim reign also a wicked king.

598-597 B.C. (3 mos) Jehoiachin a wicked king.

597-586 B.C. (11 yrs) Zedekiah's reign also a wicked king and also the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

## **IV. Jeremiah's Name.**

Jeremiah's basically means the Lord has risen or Yahweh has uplifted or Yahweh throws one commentator said it means Yah Exalts. The application of his name is the LORD or Yahweh throws or hurls His prophet in chaotic times or could mean throwing down the nation of Judah for her sins in refusal to repent.

## V. The Theme and Purpose of the Book

There are various themes and or topics in the book of Jeremiah, but when you read and study the book there is a recurring theme and purpose. The theme to me is the faithfulness of Jeremiah preaching for 40 years steadfastly against a harden people who would not hearken to the Word of God. The purpose of this book I think is the WORD of God, you see this book puts a lot of emphasis on the word of God. Some commentators say that the purpose and theme is to arouse the people to repent and return to God, some say that the purpose of the book to warn against the impending doom of judgment as the final warning in the destruction of Judah, another ones says that the purpose and theme is the backsliding, bondage and restoration of the Jews. These and others themes are good very relevant, but as you read this book you cannot hide the fact of the important emphasis that is put upon the WORD of God. Thus, the theme of this book is the faithfulness of Jeremiah's preaching especially to a people who did not want to hear the WORD of God preached to them. I believe purpose of this book simply is the WORD of God. Now, you don't have to agree with my next analysis, but remember that Jeremiah lived in a day and time where miracles and signs were still being used to confirm and credentialed the work of God as Hebrews 1:1&2 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." God used various means to speak to His prophets, whether they were sign, miracles, dreams or visions, because the Word of God was not yet complete and Jeremiah lived in these times and God could have used all kinds of signs, miracles, visions and dreams to substantiate Jeremiah as His prophet, but God chose HIS WORD as the means to show that Jeremiah was the prophet for that time.

Notice these examples:

52 times the phrase "the word of the Lord" is used in 52 chapters: Notice the first 7 in chapter 1 & 2:

- Jeremiah 1:2, "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."
- Jeremiah 2:4, "Hear ye **the word of the LORD**, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel."
- 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?"

Then you have the word, WORD itself is used 95 times, notice how this is used in the following 10 verses 12 times:

- Jeremiah 20:8, "For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the **word** of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily."

- 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.”
- Jeremiah 21:1, “The **word** which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying.”
- Jeremiah 21:11, “And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the **word** of the LORD.”
- Jeremiah 22:1, “Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this **word**.”
- Jeremiah 22:2, “And say, Hear the **word** of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates.”
- Jeremiah 22:29, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the **word** of the LORD.”
- Jeremiah 23:18, “For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his **word**? who hath marked his **word**, and heard it?”
- Jeremiah 23:28, “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my **word**, let him speak my **word** faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.”
- Jeremiah 23:29, “Is not my **word** like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

Jeremiah is constantly preaching, sharing, warning and expounding from the WORD of God that perhaps resonates with the principle in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” God wanted them to believe in Him and in His Word not in some miracle or sign, though we understand must be used at times and or course as the Word of God says the Jews require a sign.

This book of Jeremiah is saturated with the WORD of GOD as the means to reach a rebellion and prideful backslidden people to bring them to repentance and follow the Lord, but so sad that many times the end result was the same with a harden heart that would not listen not hearken to the WORD of God. There were many times that God showed mercy, compassion and forgiveness, but they would not receive the WORD of God. The problem was not the WORD of God the problem was their wicked and depraved hearts as we read in Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 9:14, “But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them.” Jeremiah 11:8, “Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.”

Another reason I think that the purpose for the book of Jeremiah is the Word of God is because the phrase, “...Thus saith the LORD...” is used 150 times! As you read this book over and over again you see this phrase and I think that in the book Jeremiah this phrase is used more than any other book. When you add the 95 times the word ‘Word’ is used it adds up to 245 times in 52 chapters that God is speaking to His people through His WORD. Then when you add the word ‘Hear’ to our mix used 52 times, you have God constantly speaking to His people by HIS WORD! Now, I didn’t even look up the words speak, cry, hearken and say that are also used in this book over and over again. Reminds me of the words of Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” God knowing this uses Jeremiah to speak to the people

with power, Jeremiah 22:29, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." 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 25:4, "And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear." Jeremiah 7:2, "Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD." I hope now that you are starting to see how often the application to the WORD of God is made by Jeremiah in his book. But sad again to think that they would not listen to the preached word of Jeremiah, they would not hearken to the Word of the LORD, notice how often this is mentioned in this book alone, one time would suffice for their obstinate hearts, but over and over again the same response to Jeremiah's preaching is that they would not HEARKEN!

- Jeremiah 6:10, "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."
- Jeremiah 6:17, "Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken."
- Jeremiah 7:27, "Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee."
- Jeremiah 11:11, "Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them."
- Jeremiah 16:12, "And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me."
- Jeremiah 23:16, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD."
- Jeremiah 26:3, "If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings."
- Jeremiah 26:4, "And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you."
- Jeremiah 26:5, "To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened."
- The tables are turn against them in Jeremiah 29:12, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you."
- Jeremiah 44:16, "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee."

How sad that the last time it is used it speaks of the awful rebellious stubborn ways of the people. Notice the compassion and longsuffering God to a STIFFNECK STUBBORN PEOPLE:

- Jeremiah 7:13, "And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not."
- Jeremiah 7:25, "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them."
- Jeremiah 26:5, "To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and

*sending them, but ye have not hearkened.”*

- Jeremiah 29:19, *“Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.”*
- Jeremiah 32:33, *“And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.”*
- Jeremiah 35:15, *“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.”*

God did not have to send them His Word, but in His goodness and mercy He did and He did not have to warn them to repent and turn to Him but in longsuffering He did, but they would not hearkened to the voice of the LORD.

Amazing that even in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry in Matthew 23 our Lord rebukes the Jews of His day for not hearkening to Him either and notice what He says in verses 31-39: *“Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 **Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”***

Then on the way to the cross notice also what Christ did and said in Luke 19:41 - 48, *“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. 45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. 47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, 48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.”*

The common people willingly listen, but the religious persons sought to destroy Him as they had done to the prophets before Him, including Jeremiah. Again the means that our GREAT GOD chooses to speak to people is through His WORD!

Again, Jeremiah 44:16, *“As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.”* In the same chapter in Jeremiah 44:5, *“But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.”* It has not changed much even in our day, most people have no interest in the Bible and will not hearken unto WORD of God! Notice also in Jeremiah 49:16, *“Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and **the pride of thine heart**, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou*

*shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.” So sad that people just don’t get it that there will be a pay day some day and that the sin of pride will damn more people to hell than any other sin, because people are so prideful and think that they can climb up the ladder of success to the highest heights and just side step God and that everything will be fine in the end, the LORD will bring every sinner down, just like He told the Jews in Jeremiah 49:16. Psalms 10:4 says, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”*

Therefore, I take the position that the theme of the book of Jeremiah is the 40 years of faithful preaching, Jeremiah preserved for 40 years as he faithfully and steadfastly preached the word of God to the people with conviction and passion. Then the purpose of the Book of Jeremiah is the WORD of God which again was preached unto the people 40 years by Jeremiah. Again, you do not have to agree with my theme and purpose for this book, but this is what I have seen in reading re-reading this book of Jeremiah. Thus, the theme is the faithfulness of Jeremiah’s preaching and the purpose is that God choose to use His WORD as the means to reach the people to show them their sins so that they would return to God in repentance and faith.

As a side note. The phrase my people is used 47 times, it is used two fold, speaking of His compassion and mercy and then it also is speaking of their obstinate heart towards God and God’s mercy.

But yet in great mercy and compassion Jehovah pleads with the people in 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.”*

As I conclude our introduction to this book, let us look at the outline to this book, most outlines are broken only into 3, 4 or 5 points I have 14 points for you:

## **VI. Outline of Jeremiah**

- I. The Prologue & The Call to Jeremiah: Chapter 1**
- II. The Call to Repentance: Chapters 2-7**
- III. The Mourning of Jeremiah: Chapters 8-10**
- IV. The Breaking of the Covenant: Chapters 11-20**
- V. The Kings Inquiry: Chapters 21 & 22**
- VI. The False Prophets: Chapters 23-29**
- VII. The Captivity and the Covenant: Chapters 30-33**
- IIIX. Concerning Kings Zedekiah & Jehoiakim: Chapters 34 & 35**
- IX. The Burning of the Scroll by King Jehoiakim: Chapter 36**
- X. Jeremiah cast in Prison: Chapters 37 & 38**
- XI. The Deliverance of Jeremiah: Chapter 39**
- XII. The Final Days: Chapters 40-45**
- XIII. The Judgment against the Nations: Chapters 46-51**
- XIV. The Epilogue or Conclusion: Chapter 52**

This concludes our introduction, next week we shall look at chapter 1.