

Jeremiah: When Life Falls Apart



"This is what the Lord says: 'You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again.'" Jer. 53:6 NLT

Life for the prophet Jeremiah was falling apart in two ways:

1. The society where he lived, ancient Jerusalem, was corrupt and in turmoil. There was injustice in the judicial system (22:12-13), flagrant hypocrisy in the religious system (2:8), idolatry (2:11), human sacrifice of their babies (7:31), widespread immorality (5:7-8), along with the tension of war (4:16) with surrounding enemy nations.
2. Jeremiah's personal life seemed to be falling apart. God had called him to a challenging and painful task. He was to represent God before the people and confront the nation of Judah about its sin (7:1-11). In addition, he was made responsible for announcing God's coming judgment through the Babylonians (modern-day Iraq) who would destroy Jerusalem (21:4; 25:11-12). All of this made Jeremiah very unpopular with the king (36:23-26), the government (36:26), the temple priesthood (20:1-2; 28:1-17), his friends (20:10), and even his family (12:6). Jeremiah suffered beatings (20:1-2), jail time (32:3; 37:15), abandonment in a deep well (38:6), and the threat of execution as a traitor (38:4; 26:11). Hardly anyone heeded his preaching (25:2-4). It seemed that he was suffering for nothing.

In the eyes of the world, Jeremiah was a total failure. However, in the eyes of heaven, he was a raging success. He faithfully endured hardship and willingly paid the price to complete God's call upon his life. For many people today, life seems to be falling apart—divorce, bankruptcy, rebellious children, job loss, sickness, failed business ventures, betrayal of friends, moral failure, strife in marriage, conflict at the job, abandonment, etc. *How do we respond when life seems to be falling apart? Jeremiah shows us how!*

Central Lesson: God can repair broken lives if we will turn to Him.

Date: Jeremiah was written approximately 627-586 B.C. The historical setting of Jeremiah's time is recorded in 2 Kings 22-25. The events in Jeremiah are not in chronological order. Scholars believe that the chronological order would be as follows:

- Chapters 1-6 during the reign of **King Josiah**
- Chapters 22:10-12 during the reign of **King Jehoahaz**
- Chapters 7-20; 25-26; 35-36; 45-46:12; 47-49 during the reign of **King Jehoiakim**.
- Chapters 22-23 during the reign of **King Jehoiachin**
- Chapters 21; 24; 27-34; 37-39 during the reign of **King Zedekiah**
- Chapters 40-44 during the reign of **King Gedaliah**

Author: Jeremiah the prophet. He was known as the weeping prophet (9:1; 13:17) because he was heartbroken over the spiritual depravity of his nation, Judah, and the coming judgment that God was sending on

Jerusalem. The book of Daniel refers to Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70-year captivity (Jer. 25:11-14; 29:10) as being from Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2). Also, the ancient writings of Ecclesiasticus, Josephus, and the Jewish Talmud attribute the book to Jeremiah. Furthermore, the New Testament also attributes the prophecies of Jeremiah to him (cf. Matt. 2:17-18; 27:9).

Title: The book is named after its author—the **Prophet Jeremiah**

Key Word: The key words in Jeremiah are **SCATTER** and **GATHER**. God "scattered" His people into the nations as a punishment for their sinfulness but promised to "gather" them back to their land 70 years later. *"Listen to this message from the Lord, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The Lord, who scattered his people, will gather them and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock."* Jer. 31:10 NLT. **Scatter**—9:16; 13:24; 18:17; 30:11; 31:10; 40:12, 15; 43:5; 46:28; 49:32; 49:36; 50:17. **Gather**—23:3; 29:14; 31:8, 10; 32:37.

Key Verse: Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10. *"This is what the Lord says: 'You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again.'" (29:10 NLT).*

Key Chapter: The key chapter is **chapter 29** (Read especially vs. 10-14). Jeremiah wrote a letter of hope to the people of Judah, who were captive to the Babylonians. Although they will suffer God's punishment for their rebellion and sin for 70 years, the Lord will restore them to their land. God has a plan for them. He intends to prosper them, but they must learn to obey God first.

Outline:

- I. Prophecies BEFORE the Fall of Jerusalem—Chapters 1-39.
- II. Prophecies AFTER the Fall of Jerusalem—Chapters 40-52.

Christ in Jeremiah: The "righteous **Branch** (NLT - descendant)," an offspring of David in chapter 23:1-8. The Messiah will sprout up from the **stump** of David's lineage (cf. Isaiah 11:1). The Messiah will one day reign over the earth in wisdom, justice, and righteousness (23:5). Judah & Israel will live in safety (23:6).

Purpose and Theme: God loves us too much to surrender us to sin's **DESTRUCTIVENESS** (Jer. 31:3-14). Sin brings us down, but God seeks to build us up. Ignoring or violating God's Word & ways of living—is always harmful and destructive. Sin causes life to fall apart—people who love God and live by His Word experience the best of life and God's favor.

In simple terms, the message of Jeremiah is this: The way to respond when life falls apart is to (1) **Heed God's warnings** (6:8, 10; 35:13; 42:19). (2) **Confess your sin & rebellion** (3:12-13; 4:14; 14:20). (3) **Love God with all your heart** (29:12-13). (4) **Rebuild your life according to God's way and Word** (26:13; 38:20; 42:5-6; 7:23; 11:7). (5) **Let God change your heart** (24:7; 31:31-33; 32:39) (6) **Enjoy God's blessing & favor** (4:2; 31:11-14, 23).

Central Lesson: God can repair broken lives if we will turn to Him.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.