

## Reading Jeremiah

### The Big Picture

1	The Call of Jeremiah	30-33	Promises of hope and restoration
2-6	Israel's sin and idolatry > Call to repent	34-44	Jeremiah's story during Jerusalem's siege and the exile
7-10	Israel's corrupt worship		
11-20	Jeremiah and Yahweh wrestle with Israel's sin	45-51	Oracles of judgment against the nations
21-24	Indictment against Israel's leaders	52	Story of Jerusalem's destruction and the exile [= 2Kings 24-25]
25-29	Jeremiah announces Babylon as Yahweh's tool for judgment		

### Historical Background

- Jeremiah lived during the reign of Judah's last good king (Josiah), and through the attacks of Babylon on Jerusalem that led to the exile (630-590B.C.). See 2 Kings 22-25 for the context.

### Main Themes in Jeremiah

1. Israel has broken the Sinai covenant and sinned: Chs. 2-3, 5, 7, 10
  - forsaking Yahweh and the Torah
  - social injustice and oppression
  - idolatry and worship of other deities

**Key images:** Look for how Israel's Idolatry is described with metaphors about adultery, marital unfaithfulness and prostitution. They are powerful images of how sin and selfishness ruin our relationship with God.
2. Israel's wicked leaders are held accountable
  - Kings/shepherds (23:1-6) and Priests and Prophets (6:13-15; 23:13-22)
3. False prophets are those who *always* promise prosperity and favor, regardless of Israel's behavior (i.e. "prosperity gospel"). See 5:31, 6:13-15, 14:13-16, 23:16-18
  - False prophecy (in Jeremiah) **is not** a conscious, evil intention to deceive, but rather "the right theology, at the wrong time"
  - Jeremiah 28: True vs. False prophets
    - Torah's basic teaching:* (1) Yahweh is faithful to His chosen people and so (2) He will punish the wicked
    - Hananiah's wrong application of Torah in Jeremiah 28:* (1) Yahweh is faithful to His people (= Israel) and so (2) He will punish the wicked (= Babylon)
    - Jeremiah's correct application of Torah:* (1) Yahweh is faithful to his people (= the repentant in Israel and the nations) and so (2) Yahweh will punish the wicked (= the rebellious in Israel)
4. Israel has refused to listen to the true prophets
  - Ch. 36: The king of Judah burns Jeremiah's scroll
  - Ch. 37: Jeremiah thrown in prison for "treason"

5. Yahweh calls Israel to repent (**key words**: look for the word “turn, return, repent” in Jeremiah)
  - Key Image for repentance: “Circumcise your hearts” – Jer 4:3-4 (remember Deuteronomy 30:6): Israel needs to undergo a heart transformation
6. Yahweh will judge Israel for covenant violation
  - He appoints Babylon as an instrument of judgment: 4:5-29
  - Predicts a 70 year exile in Babylon: ch. 25 (see verses 8-14)
7. After the punishment of exile, Yahweh promises a future restoration
  - “when I restore their captivity” = 30:3, 18; 31:23; 33:6-9
  - Exile will end with repentance: 29:10-14
  - Exile will end with a NEW COVENANT: 31:31-34; 32:37-41
    - Yahweh will heal Israel’s broken heart
8. The promise of a future messianic king from David’s line (23:5-6; 33:15-16)
  - He will bring “justice and righteousness” (= social justice)

**EAT THIS BOOK**

