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Jeremiah Introduction



Jeremiah - Steve Gregg

In this introduction to the book of Jeremiah, Steve Gregg explains that the book is easier to understand than Isaiah, even though it covers a challenging period of time. During the darkest spiritual season of Judah, Assyria was threatening the kingdom. Jeremiah was a prophet who groaned, wept, and cried as he confronted the hypocrisy of the people during the nation's siege by Babylonians. Unlike some other prophets, he was not married and did not have children in Jerusalem.

Transcript

I believe that we'll find the book of Jeremiah to be somewhat easier to understand than the book of Isaiah, though there will be challenges in covering it in the time we have, partly because Jeremiah is the longest of the books of the prophets. He has fewer chapters than Isaiah has, but he has more pages, there's more words in Jeremiah than there are in Isaiah, because in general, the average length of a chapter is longer in Jeremiah. Some of them are very long, over 50 verses, though not many are that long.

But as we read Jeremiah, we will find, I think, greater ease in understanding his message. I think he doesn't use quite as much figurative language as Isaiah does, but he does use much of the same figurative language. But at least it'll be familiar to us now.

Having gone through Isaiah together, there will be things that would have been maybe more difficult in Jeremiah had we not already encountered them and explained them when we were going through Isaiah. Jeremiah lived, and the prophet said, about 100 years after Isaiah, and while Isaiah did predict the Babylonian exile, and even the return from Babylon, Jeremiah lived at the time when the exile actually took place. The political situation at the time of Jeremiah was considerably different than in Isaiah.

In Isaiah's lifetime, the kings of Judah were threatened by Assyria primarily, and in fact, Jerusalem almost fell to Assyria. Judah, the cities of Judah, other than Jerusalem, did fall to Assyria. Jerusalem was spared supernaturally.

But by the time of Jeremiah, Assyria's dominance of the region had been going on for about three centuries, and yet it was waning. Assyria was beginning to wane in power,

and a new power was rising in the region, and that was Babylon. At the same time, Egypt was trying to reassert some of its former glory, but Egypt never quite had what it took to recover, frankly, from the Exodus hundreds of years earlier.

Egypt was a mighty, powerful nation at the time before the Exodus, but God did a lot of devastating things to Egypt's economy when he delivered Israel, and Egypt never really rose again to be the world power it had been before, but it kept trying at times, and so Egypt was a player. And of course, Egypt was southwest of Israel, and Babylon was northeast of Israel, as Assyria was, and so Israel was often caught in the middle of the power plays of these different nations that were trying to control the whole area, and which often did. Jeremiah and Josiah the king were both born during the reign of Manasseh.

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was the worst king Judah had, and although Hezekiah, his father, had done much to try to reform the idolatry of the country, he had done so at the expense of trusting in Yahweh instead of Egypt, and Assyria had come in Hezekiah's time and wiped out the whole nation except for Jerusalem. While we rejoice in the fact that Jerusalem survived the Assyrian invasion, the nation of Judah was devastated, and only Jerusalem survived. Therefore, the policy of trusting in Yahweh by Hezekiah might have been viewed as a bad policy.

His son, Manasseh, may have thought, well, if we had trusted in the other gods, Judah wouldn't have been devastated like this by the Assyrians. Whatever his reasons, Manasseh took the country back into idolatry with a vengeance, and more than any other king before him. He even ended up sacrificing his own children to Molech and established every kind of occult and idolatrous practice and evil practice in Judah.

And, to make matters worse, he had the longest reign of any king in Judah. So, the very worst king reigned the longest. It was definitely the darkest, spiritually, the darkest season for Judah, a nation which had many dark seasons.

But the worst king reigning longer than anybody else is about as bad as it can get. But it was during the reign of Manasseh that two babies were born that were to change things, or at least gave Judah a chance to change in significant ways. One was Josiah, who became king and set about to reform things as Hezekiah had done.

The other baby was Jeremiah, who was probably just a little bit younger than Josiah. They were contemporaries. And, therefore, during Judah's darkest hour, God gave them some hope in the birth of some significant young men, the king Josiah and the prophet Jeremiah.

It was in 627 was the year that Josiah began his reforms. Six years later, the priest Hilkiah, in renovating the temple, found a copy of a book of the law. Most scholars believe this is the book of Deuteronomy.

There's probably an allusion to the book of Deuteronomy in Jeremiah chapter 11. And when Josiah was showed this book by the priest, it was unfamiliar. It's interesting because Josiah had already tried to eradicate idolatry from the nation before the book was found, and yet he was unaware of the book.

He was unaware of the law of God. And when he read Deuteronomy, he tore his clothes and realized that the nation was in trouble with God. Because Deuteronomy had said that if Israel would turn from God, that God would bring every curse and every plague upon them.

And so Josiah, seeking to avert this, brought about very powerful radical reforms, both in Judah and up in Israel, which was not his territory. He even went up to the altars that Jeroboam had set up and desecrated those altars because they'd been made to a golden calf up there. So he actually intruded into territory that wasn't in his domain and tried to bring reforms all around.

He was a very good king. He was not perfect. Nobody's perfect, and every king of Judah that was good had one fatal flaw.

Josiah's was that he went to battle against Pharaoh Necho when the Egyptians were coming up to fight against Babylon. And apparently Josiah wanted to prevent that. He took his armies out to fight against them.

A prophet warned Josiah not to go, but Josiah went anyway and he got killed there. And so he actually got killed at the Valley of Megiddo. And so Josiah died and his reforms fell apart.

Actually, his sons, the kings that succeeded him, didn't have a heart for God, and so there was only a succession of wicked rulers that followed Josiah's reign. And all the reforms he had done were unfortunately too shallow, probably too little too late, as the way we should see it. The nation was pretty apostate.

They were in love with their sins and with their idolatries, and although there was a good king, he couldn't change the heart of the people. He could only make them stop doing those things, but when he was gone, they reverted back. Which, of course, is the way of the world after all.

I mean, you can have a good leader who outlaws sinful behavior, but if the people themselves are not righteous in their hearts, they'll revert to it as soon as the pressure's off. And many people actually feel like what our nation needs is to get some good legislators in there to legislate some moral standards for the country. But obviously, if our country loves sin, legislating moral standards is only going to have a short-term effect.

And if some leader gets in there that makes people behave differently than they want to,

they'll vote him out and get someone in there and let him do what they want. That's how Israel was. They had a ruler that was righteous.

They weren't righteous. They had to behave under his rule, but as soon as he was gone, they went right back, and the kings that followed him also went back to their idolatry and remained in it until they fell to the Babylonians. Now, the rise of Babylon was taking place in the lifetime of Jeremiah.

In 607 BC, Babylon conquered Assyria, and Assyria had been, of course, the big nation for 300 years, but now was subjected to Babylon. And now Babylon was the big nation, the big oppressor, the big kingdom in the world. And that was in 607, and two years later, at the Battle of Carchemish, Babylon conquered Egypt also.

And therefore, Egypt was no longer a serious player. Babylon was the only superpower in the region, or frankly, in the world. Now, between these two victories, between the time that Babylon conquered Assyria and the time they conquered Egypt at Carchemish, Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, invaded Jerusalem and did some harm, some damage to the city, did not destroy the city and didn't fully conquer it in all respects, but did take some captives, managed to get some partial victories, and took captives away to Babylon with him.

And Daniel and his three friends were among those captives that were taken away in 605 BC. And we read about Daniel in his own book and about Nebuchadnezzar capturing these nobles, basically, people of noble birth, sort of the cream of Jerusalem society, were taken away from Jerusalem and taken into Babylon, and that included Daniel and his three friends. But Jerusalem had not fallen.

Later, Babylonian troops returned and did further harm to Jerusalem in 597 BC and took some more captives, and Ezekiel was one of the captives taken at that time. And then, Zedekiah was the last king in Judah to rebel against Babylon, and his rebellion caused Nebuchadnezzar to come back again in 586 BC, and destroyed the city, burned down the temple, and so forth, and carried most of the rest of the people of Jerusalem into Babylon. So, Judah and Jerusalem were pretty much depopulated in 586 BC, but not entirely.

The poor of the land, some of the harmless peasants that Nebuchadnezzar did not find to be a threat, he let them stay in Judah. Among those that stayed in Judah was Jeremiah. He was prophesying for about 50 years, during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah, until the time Jerusalem fell, and he was there for all three of the Babylonian attacks.

So, when Daniel and his friends were taken captive, Jeremiah was there in Jerusalem to see that happen. And, when Ezekiel was taken captive, Jeremiah was in Jerusalem and saw that captivity, too, in 597. And he was also there to see the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Now, while that was a devastating conquest, and many hundreds of thousands of Jews apparently were killed and taken into captivity, Jeremiah was given mercy by the Babylonians, because it was known that he had actually counseled Jerusalem to surrender. And he had actually been put in prison by the king of Judah, because he was counseling surrender. And that made him a friend of the Babylonians, as far as the Babylonians were concerned.

And so, he was spared and given his liberty after the city fell. He was, however, compelled against his wishes to go into Egypt with some of the people who, with him, had survived. And that's where he ended up.

But, Jeremiah's historical setting there is during this time where Babylon is rising. Babylon conquers Assyria, conquers Egypt, and conquers Jerusalem during Jeremiah's lifetime. And there are three deportations, including the last one, which actually was the destruction of the walls of the city and the buildings and the temple in it.

And he lived to see that. After that, there was a governor set up named Galiah that the Babylonians set up in Jerusalem when it was destroyed. And then he got himself assassinated.

And he was assassinated by Jews, and therefore Nebuchadnezzar would come down and bring reprisals on the Jews for killing the governor that he appointed. And because those reprisals were anticipated, some people fled from there to get away from those attacks that would come. And they went down to Egypt, and they forced Jeremiah to go with them against his will.

Now, as far as the man Jeremiah, he's a very interesting character in the Bible. There are other Jeremiahs. Seven, in fact, other men in the Bible are named Jeremiah.

But this one was the prophet, and he was also a priest. Many times, God seemed to call prophets from among the priesthood. Ezekiel was a priest also.

And Zechariah, the son of Barakai, who wrote the book of Zechariah, is also a priest who was called to be a prophet. There was another Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who the Spirit came upon, and he prophesied. He got killed.

He's the one who was killed between the temple and the altar that Jesus referred to. So, priests sometimes were the ones that God called to be prophets. And Jeremiah was a priest also.

He probably had not served in the priesthood because he was very young when God called him. His ministry was over a period of 50 years. And when he was called, he complained that he was too young to be a prophet.

But God said, don't say that. I'm going to be with you, and I'm going to make you a sharp

sword and a shaft in my hand to bring my words to these people. So, even if Jeremiah was, say, 20 at the time that he was called, he would have lived to be 70 and beyond.

He would have been 70, in fact, at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in that case. And he lived beyond that because he went down into Egypt and lived some time. We don't know how long there.

So, he was probably under 20 when he was called, probably a teenager. And that would mean he had not begun functioning as a priest yet because they would start at age 30. He lived in a town in the region of Benjamite territory, just three miles from Jerusalem, actually, called Anathoth.

It was actually a priestly town, a Levitical town. And he wrote this book, but he also is thought by the Jews to have written 1 and 2 Kings. It's a Jewish tradition that he did.

He certainly lived through much of the material that Kings talks about. And he may have written the books of Kings. It's a possibility because he did live to the end of that period that they record.

And the style of Kings is not very different than that of his historical portions in his book. Now, it was the 13th year of Josiah when he was called to ministry. That's 626 B.C. And he ministered until 586 B.C. when Jerusalem fell.

And that's exactly 50 years, from 626 to 586. But he didn't die immediately at that time. Of course, in Egypt he lived some more years.

We don't know how many. Maybe some traditions say as many as 20. In fact, one tradition of the Jews says that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt 20 years later, after 586 B.C. and took Jeremiah captive to Babylon.

So, on that tradition, Jeremiah didn't die in Egypt. He died in Babylon. But the more prevailing tradition is that he did die in Egypt and that he was killed by one of his countrymen.

We don't have details about that and it's not in Scripture. It's just a tradition of the Jews. So, he may have died in Egypt or in Babylon, actually.

The period described that he lived is described in 2 Kings 22-25 and 2 Chronicles 34-36. He is often referred to as the weeping prophet because he is so emotional. He groans, he weeps, he travails, he cries.

And there are certain references there to that in your notes. Chapter 9, verse 1 is a really classic passage about how he wished his eyes were rivers of tears. He says, And, likewise, in other places in his book, he makes reference to his weeping over them.

He was still young, of course, when he began to prophesy. Apparently, not hardened.

Still more emotionally sensitive than maybe an older man might be.

At first, he was reluctant to be a prophet. He said, I'm too young for that. And God said, no, don't say that.

You're going to be my prophet after all. He did become rather bold, though, once God's spirit enabled him. And he was very confrontational to the apostate Jews.

He put his life on the line and was imprisoned more than once. And his life was in danger at least one time. When they were going to kill him, he was delivered providentially by someone speaking up in his favor.

But he was very courageous and yet very sensitive and emotional. In this respect, he might be seen as a type of Christ. Because Christ was sensitive, tender, gentle, but also very confrontational with the hypocrisy of the people of his time.

There are other ways that I think Jeremiah could be seen as a type of Christ as well, which we'll talk about in a moment. The early days of Jeremiah's message were a call to repent. The nation was in trouble.

They were in sin. They were in danger. Babylon was looming as a danger.

And of course, even Isaiah had predicted that Babylon would take everything away to Babylon. And they'd go into a captivity. Jeremiah specifically predicted the 70-year period of captivity in chapter 25.

And that's the only prophet who actually said how long the captivity would be. But he was right. It lasted for 70 years.

When his calls to repentance failed, God told him to stop praying for these people. And instead, he urged them to surrender to the Babylonians. Now, you have to realize that when a nation is under siege by Babylonians, and someone inside the city is going telling people publicly, God wants you to surrender.

If you don't surrender, you'll die. But God says if you do surrender, you'll live and be taken into captivity. That undermines the military effort, especially in a religious community where prophets are speaking for God.

It says God's telling you to surrender. But the king and the people don't want to surrender. He is charged with demoralizing the morale of the troops.

And so, he's put in jail for that. So, his early messages are about repentance. Maybe the city could be spared.

Later, he realizes they're not going to repent or be spared. So, their best option is to surrender. In chapter 16, verses 1 through 4, God told Jeremiah not to get married.

Which is unusual for a Jewish man. Jewish men usually would marry. Ezekiel was married, and Isaiah was married, and certainly Hosea was married.

And it seems like most prophets were married. But it was a special sign that God said Jeremiah should not get married because people who had wives and children in Jerusalem would have great heartache because of the disasters coming on the city. It's like when Jesus said, when he's talking about the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, he said, but you'll say in those days, blessed are the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never gave suck.

That things will be so awful. Weep for yourselves and for your children, he said to the women who were going to be facing that 70 AD time. In times of great judgment and disaster, it's nice not to have the grief of seeing your family suffering.

And so God spared Jeremiah that, said don't get married, don't have kids, because those who have kids and who are married are going to see their wives and children taken into captivity or slaughtered or whatever. It's going to be a horrible thing for those who have families that they care about. Better to not have a family in a case like this.

And so he didn't marry. Now, I already told you about his being forced to flee to Egypt and that there'd be two traditions about his death. One is that he was killed by a countryman in Egypt, one of his fellow Jews.

The other is that 20 years later, in 566, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt. And, you know, Jeremiah and others have been down there. He was captured and taken away to Babylon.

We don't have any way of confirming any of the traditions about this, not from scripture. Now, there is a tradition, and it may have been alluded to in the New Testament, that when Jeremiah went to Egypt, he managed to get the Ark of the Covenant out of the temple, or away from Israel anyway. The temple would have been burned by then, but the point is that he would have gotten the Ark and hidden it and carried it down to Egypt.

So the Jewish rabbis taught that when the Messianic Age comes, Jeremiah will return. And he will bring the Ark of the Covenant back again. And he'll bring out the pot of manna that was in it and miraculously feed the multitudes with the manna from the pot.

And that may be why the people said of Jesus, when he fed the multitudes with a few bits of bread, in John chapter 6 and verse 9, or not verse 9, verse 14, it said, when those men, when they had seen this sign that Jesus did, said, this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. They might have meant Jeremiah, the prophet, who is to come as a precursor to the Messiah coming in the Messianic Age dawning. In Matthew chapter 16, when Jesus asked the disciples, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? They answered, in Matthew 16, 14, some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others

Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

Well, why would anyone think that Jesus was Jeremiah? Jeremiah had died hundreds of years earlier. Well, that was probably reflecting their beliefs, this Jewish tradition, that Jeremiah would return at the beginning of the Messianic Age. And so they figured Elijah, or John the Baptist, or Jeremiah, one of those figures, not the Messiah apparently.

Strange they didn't have Messiah in the mix there. But that's probably because Jesus wasn't acting Messianic, in their opinion. He wasn't rallying the troops.

He wasn't making any moves to deliver the Jews from Rome. And so people thought that he was maybe one of the precursors of the Messiah, rather than the Messiah. Elijah was expected to come.

Jeremiah was expected to come. So maybe he was one of them. Now, I believe that in likening Jesus to Jeremiah, or thinking he might be Jeremiah, there was some similarity that almost makes that suggestion reasonable.

Of course, Jeremiah was not Jesus, and Jesus was not Jeremiah. But Jeremiah could easily have been a type of Jesus. On the back of your notes, I've listed a few things about Jeremiah that could be said to parallel Jesus.

Now, the New Testament does not tell us that Jeremiah is a type of Christ. So this would be a matter of some speculation, but it's not based on nothing. Both Jeremiah and Jesus were called, and their ministry specified, before they were born.

In Jeremiah chapter 1, of course, and verse 5, God said, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I sanctified you, and ordained you a prophet to the nations. Jesus also was called and named before his birth as the Savior of the world, as the Messiah, in Matthew 1.21. While he was still in the womb, an angel told Joseph that his name would be called Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

He was named and called before birth. Not all the prophets were. But Jeremiah was, and Jesus was, and also both Jesus and Jeremiah never married.

Again, a fairly unusual circumstance for Jewish men. In Jewish attitudes of Jesus' time, Jewish sentiments, an unmarried man was not a complete man. Some of the rabbis said, a man without a wife is not a complete man.

And therefore it expressed a sentiment that men should marry, and most did. It was unusual for men not to marry. Paul didn't marry, but he indicated that that was because of his special calling.

Jesus didn't marry either. He never indicated why he didn't. But he didn't, and Jeremiah didn't, and in that respect they resemble each other also.

Also, both Jesus and Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem. We saw that Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet, but Jesus also wept over Jerusalem. They both lived at a time when they saw Jerusalem was about to be destroyed.

Jeremiah saw the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus was looking at the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. And Jesus wept over Jerusalem, as Jeremiah had.

In Luke chapter 19, verse 41, it says, Now as he drew near, Jesus saw the city and wept over it, saying, If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you, and close you in on every side, and level you and your children within you to the ground. And they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.

This weeping over Jerusalem, over the fact that the Romans would come and destroy it, resembles Jeremiah weeping over Jerusalem, knowing that the Babylonians were going to come and destroy Jerusalem in his day. Here's maybe a far-fetched comparison, but I thought of it as contemplating ways in which Jeremiah might be like Jesus. Jeremiah actually made a yoke as part of his prophetic actions.

He had an acted parable, like some of the prophets do, and he made an ox yoke, and he wore it. In Jeremiah 27.2, the Lord said to me, Make for yourselves bonds and yokes. Now, plural, yourselves may be Jeremiah and his few disciples he may have had.

We only know of two. There was Baruch, his scribe, and there was an Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed-Melech who was faithful to God and sympathetic to Jeremiah. Whether there were others or not, we don't know.

But apparently those that were with Jeremiah were to make, along with him, yokes, and put them on their necks. And this was to symbolize the yoke of bondage that would be coming upon them from Babylon. Now, Jesus said, obviously, in Matthew 11.29, Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.

He may have even made yokes. Justin Martyr, an early Christian father, said that when Jesus was a young man, before he went into the ministry, and when he worked as a carpenter in Nazareth, that he actually had, as all the craftsmen did in those days, a slogan for his business. And that out in front of Jesus' business, his carpenter business, as you might put a shingle out to declare the name of your company or whatever, or your slogan, like, you know, have it your way, or whatever the slogan is for the company, Justin Martyr said that the slogan that Jesus had over his carpenter shop was, My yokes fit well.

In other words, he specialized in making ox yokes, and claimed that they fit well. Now, I

don't know where Justin got that information. It may be a true tradition passed down orally from the first century on, or he may have made it up.

But if it is true, it's rather interesting that Jesus was a man who made yokes for a living before he was in the ministry. And then he told people, Take my yoke upon you. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.

And, of course, Jeremiah was not predicting an easy yoke. But he's the only prophet in the Old Testament, or the only person in the Old Testament who put a yoke over his neck and made ox yokes as part of his message. So, in a sense, both Jesus and Jeremiah used the imagery of a yoke to convey their message.

Also, Jeremiah and Jesus alone spoke about the significance of the Valley of Hinnom as the place where those who were slain in Jerusalem would be thrown, their corpses. Only Jeremiah speaks of it this way. Actually, I think Isaiah makes sort of an allusion to it of sorts.

He uses the word Tophet, but Tophet is another name for Valley of Hinnom. Jeremiah actually used the name Valley of Hinnom, and so did Jesus in his use of the word Gehenna. No other writer of Scripture in the New Testament used the word Gehenna, except James, who didn't use it literally.

James said that the tongue is a fire, a world of evil. It's full of the fire of Gehenna. He said the tongue is set on fire from Gehenna.

Not entirely clear how James means that, but he's not obviously talking about a literal situation. The fire is not really burning. I mean, the tongue is not really burning, and it's not the burning of Gehenna.

But apart from that one statement in James, the only person in the Bible who used the word Gehenna in the New Testament was Jesus. And he used it several times, a dozen times on record or so. And he spoke of it as the place where those who rejected him were going to be thrown into the flames of Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, as the word means.

Jeremiah also spoke similarly about the Valley of Hinnom, and as such seemed to give Jesus the language of Gehenna as the place of judgment. In Jeremiah chapter 7, in verse 31, Jeremiah said, And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that's the Valley of Hinnom or Gehenna, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come to my heart. Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when it will be no more called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room.

The corpses of the people will be for food for the birds of the heavens and for the beasts

of the earth, and no one will frighten them away. Of course, he's talking about the great slaughter that would come on Jerusalem when the Babylonians came, and Jesus also warned continually of the danger that was coming upon the Jews of his day, that they were going to be facing a similar fate if they did not respond to him. I mentioned Isaiah made an allusion to it.

We have an allusion to it in Isaiah 30, but it's Jeremiah who spells it out somewhat more. In Isaiah chapter 30 and verse 33, Isaiah said, For Tophet, remember Tophet is the Valley of Hinnom, for Tophet was established of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large.

Its pyre, which is of course where you burn corpses, is fire with much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone kindles it. So we see that Isaiah refers to the Valley of Hinnom as a place where the dead are burned, corpses are burned. It's a funeral pyre.

Jeremiah refers to it as a mass grave. The abundance of the corpses that will be buried there will make it suited to call the place the Valley of Slaughter. And Jesus also gave gruesome descriptions of Gehenna.

In one place he borrowed language from Isaiah, where Isaiah did not use the term Gehenna, but Jesus did, and he said, The fire is not quenched and the worm does not die. A passage from Isaiah 66, 24 where, according to Jesus, it is talking about Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, although Isaiah doesn't use the term in that place. So Jesus and Jeremiah name the Valley of Hinnom as the place where the judgment of the wicked will take place, and it did in 586 BC, in Jeremiah's day, and in 70 AD, in the lifetime of Jesus' disciples, some of them.

Also, of course, Jesus and Jeremiah were messengers of the New Covenant. When we think of the term New Covenant in the Old Testament, we're always thinking of Jeremiah 31. There are many references in the Old Testament to another covenant God would make, an everlasting covenant, a covenant of peace, but the term New Covenant is from Jeremiah.

In Jeremiah 31, and beginning at verse 31, he says, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant, which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will

remember no more. God said the time is coming when it will not be like the old covenant where God had a few people like the Levites to teach the people about God, to teach them the law.

God will write His law in their hearts so they internally know Him. Those who are in the new covenant know God personally and do not depend on someone else to inform them who God is or help them to know the Lord. They have Him dwelling inside.

So that's the new covenant. Now Jesus, of course, in the upper room with His disciples at the Last Supper instituted a new ritual at the Passover there. And in Luke 22.20 it says, Likewise also He took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you.

Now the new covenant, Jeremiah predicted, Jesus instituted. You drink this cup, you're drinking the blood of the new covenant now. You won't remember the Exodus where God made the old covenant anymore.

You're not going to remember the Exodus and you're going to remember me now. When you take this Passover from now on, you're not going to be remembering the Exodus like your fathers did. You'll be doing this in remembrance of me because there's a new covenant I'm making with you.

It's not about Moses and the old covenant anymore. So both Jeremiah and Jesus were called before their birth to the ministry. Both of them never married.

Both of them wept over Jerusalem. Both of them had made use of a yoke in their message. Both of them warned that the sinners of their day would be thrown into the valley of Hinnom.

And both of them were messengers of the new covenant. In those respects, I think Jeremiah qualifies as a foreshadowing of Christ Himself. As I said, His temperament was also a lot like Christ in that He was sensitive and tender but also quite bold and confrontational in His message when He needed to be.

Now, Jeremiah was not the only prophet on the scene during his ministry. During the 50 years that he ministered, there were prophets in Jerusalem besides him, and there were some that had already gone into exile. Remember, Daniel went into exile during the lifetime of Jeremiah, and Daniel's book was written at least the early parts of Daniel that correspond with the lifetime of Jeremiah.

Daniel outlived him. Daniel was apparently a younger contemporary of Jeremiah and lived very long beyond the time that Jeremiah probably did. But they were contemporary for a while, and Ezekiel also was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah.

In fact, Ezekiel might very well have heard Jeremiah preach in Jerusalem before the time

that Ezekiel was carried away in 597 B.C. because Jeremiah had been preaching there for some time when Ezekiel was carried away. And so these prophets were actually prophesying in Babylon among the exiles, Daniel and Ezekiel, at the same time that Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem. Along with Jeremiah in Jerusalem were two other prophets at least that we know about who wrote books, Habakkuk and Zephaniah.

If you read in the introductions, those books, they also had ministries that overlapped the same time period in Jerusalem as Jeremiah. There's also another guy. He didn't write any books, but his name was Uriah the son of Shemaiah.

Jeremiah 26 verses 20 through 23 mentions him. He was killed. He was a martyr.

He didn't write any books that we have, but he was a prophet of God contemporary with Jeremiah. We don't know much about his ministry because what's going on there is the story is telling about how Jeremiah himself almost was killed but was just barely spared and he survived. But in the context of telling about Jeremiah as being spared from death he tells us about another prophet who was not spared and we don't know really much at all about him.

In Jeremiah 26 verse 20 it says, Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the Lord Uriah the son of Shemaiah of Kirgite-Jerim who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. So this guy was speaking the same kind of message Jeremiah was. He was he never made a big splash like Jeremiah did.

I mean we remember Jeremiah he wrote a major book of the Bible the longest of the prophetic books but this man apparently had the same message but never became as well known because he didn't write or publish or perish you know. And it says when Jehoiakim the king with all his mighty men and all the princes heard the words of Uriah the king sought him to put him to death and when Uriah heard it he was afraid and fled and he went to Egypt. But then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt Elnath and the son of Akbar and other men who went with him to Egypt and they brought Uriah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king who killed him with a sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

So this is given as a contrast to Jeremiah who almost was killed and did survive because it says in verse 24 nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that they should not give him to the hand of the people to put him to death. Habakkuk and Zephaniah are contemporary there in Jerusalem with Jeremiah also this man Uriah how long he prophesied we don't know. He fled to Egypt and his voice was probably never again heard in Jerusalem.

Now about the book itself it's the longest of prophetic books. Its main theme is God's impending judgment on Judah. Certainly chapters 1 through 29 more than half the book

are devoted to that subject the impending judgment on Judah from the Babylonians.

But another theme in the book of course is the subsequent messianic age. In that respect Jeremiah is sort of on the same page that Isaiah was in much of his writings. Isaiah talked about the fall of Jerusalem and the messianic age and so does Jeremiah but Jeremiah is living at the time where Jerusalem is about ready to fall.

The messianic age is especially focused on in chapters 30 through 33 which sometimes is called the little book of comfort. Remember Isaiah chapter 40 through 66 those 27 chapters are called the book of comfort by most scholars. Well this smaller section of four chapters Jeremiah 30 through 33 is sometimes called the little book of comfort because it's of the same subject matter.

Jeremiah reveals more about the author's personal life and inner struggles than any of the other prophetic books do. Most of them are just words. We don't really get to know the man very well.

We do get to know Jeremiah very well because he shares a lot of his inner emotional struggles. He didn't write his prophecies initially. He started prophesying 20 years before he wrote any of them down.

It was in chapter 36 that God told him to write down the prophecies that he was giving. And he did. These chapters, at least the first 21 chapters of his prophecies, were presented to King Jehoiakim who showed no respect for them.

He cut them in pieces with a knife and threw them in the fire. And so when Jeremiah heard that he rewrote it again and added more words to it too. So it's kind of interesting that he would write down prophecies 20 years after he'd given them and then be able to rewrite them and add to them.

We sometimes think in terms of a prophet is he's under some kind of magical or supernatural influence. He's almost writing by automatic writing. But instead he seems to be writing from memory.

He preached and 20 years later he wrote down what his sermons were and his messages were. And when that first copy got burned up by Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was able to write it down and expand on it. He said he had many more similar words besides.

This is in chapter 36. It tells about this. The book of Jeremiah is quoted seven times in other books.

Most of them New Testament books, but Daniel chapter 9 verse 2. Daniel's actually reading the book of Jeremiah over in Babylon. So Jeremiah's book outlived him and made its way to Babylon. Although he wrote to Jerusalem, copies of it must have been taken to Babylon.

And Daniel was reading it in Daniel chapter 9 and he was reading Jeremiah chapter 25 where it said that the exile of the Jews would be 70 years. And from that Daniel knew that he was living at the end of that time and he began to pray and ask God to deliver the people as Jeremiah had predicted. The other quotations are all in the New Testament.

Matthew 2.18 quotes a passage in Jeremiah where Rachel is weeping for her children in connection with the slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem. In Matthew 27.9 the prophecy about actually it's interesting. There's a prophecy that is given and is attributed to Jeremiah, but it appears more to be a prophecy of Zechariah.

It appears to be referring to Zechariah chapter 11, but Matthew attributes it to Jeremiah. Most evangelical scholars would say that there's kind of two prophecies that are intended, mixed together. One from Jeremiah and one in Zechariah.

The prominent features that are quoted are really from Zechariah, but since Jeremiah is a more major prophet, it is he to whom it is attributed. That is Matthew chapter 27 and verse 9 where it says that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of him who is prized, whom they of the children of Israel had priced and gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me. That's not an exact quote, but it's more the features of that quote are more from Zechariah than from Jeremiah.

But some think that it's also alluding to Jeremiah's purchase of a piece of land. There's purchase of a piece of land in Zechariah 11. There's a purchase of a piece of land in Jeremiah also.

And so some think it's like Jeremiah and Zechariah's ideas are being put together and the credit's being given to Jeremiah because he's the more prominent prophet. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 31 and then also 2 Corinthians 10-17 both quote let he who glories glory in the Lord. That's from Jeremiah chapter 9 verse 24.

Paul quotes it twice in 1 Corinthians 1-31 and 2 Corinthians 10-17. And then prophecy about the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 is quoted in Hebrews at some length in chapter 8 of Hebrews. Hebrews 8-12 quotes the new covenant prophecy in its entirety from Jeremiah 31-34.

And then a part of it is quoted again in chapter 10, a smaller part Hebrews 10-16-17. So that's how Jeremiah's book appears elsewhere than in his own book. Now I'm not going to take much time because we're done.

We've run out of time. But on your notes I've given you several alternative ways to outline the book. In the chart I gave you, the topical outline on the left is probably the main outline that would, if you were going to make an outline, you would probably have

made something like this where chapter 1 is the call of Jeremiah to prophesy.

Chapters 2-29 would be prophecies condemning Judah and Jerusalem. Then chapters 30-33 would be the Messianic prophecy, the little book of comfort. Chapters 34-45 talk about the calamity coming on Judah again.

And then chapters 46-51 are prophecies against heathen nations, just like Isaiah had in Isaiah chapters 13-23. We have a block of chapters against various heathen nations here in Jeremiah in chapters 46-51. And then chapter 52 is like a historical appendix.

It's not a prophecy at all. It's more of an appendix talking about what happened to Jeremiah afterwards. And that's how we would normally outline the book.

I've given some alternative outlines here. You can look at yourself if you want to. But the chronological outline is the main thing I'd call your attention to real quickly here.

You may have noticed if you were reading Jeremiah recently and very attentively that it's not in chronological order at all. Many times a prophecy that is dated much earlier is presented later after prophecies that are really later prophecies. And you don't have the chapters arranged in their chronological order.

So I have given you a chronological outline there at the bottom of your page so that you see which chapters were written in what order. For example, the chapters that were written in Josiah's reign would be chapters 1-20 and in Jehoiakim's reign chapter 22 25 36 and 45-49 were written in Jehoiakim's reign according to the dates given. Jehoiakim's reign next, chapters 13 and part of 22 were written during Jehoiakim's reign.

And then Zedekiah's reign chapters 23 and 24 27-29 parts of 49 50 and parts of 51 and so forth. You can see that some of the earlier chapters belong to Zedekiah's reign like chapter 21 or chapters 23 and 24 and yet that was the later period of Jeremiah's life. So you can see by looking at that outline which chapters were written when and I don't know if it helps.

When you look at any given chapter it's good to really figure out, okay, what was going on there? And you have to realize, oh, now I'm reading about an earlier period than I was reading about in the last chapter I just read. And so laying those out chronologically like that might be of use to you. I don't know if it will or not.

But I thought I would like to have that myself for my own studies of Jeremiah. It's helpful to me. Well, we're out of time and so next time we'll actually get into Jeremiah chapter 1.