

JEREMIAH

*The Babylonians will come as a calamity from the north*

SETTING

627 - 582 BC

KEY VERSE

*"This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and will make it desolate forever."*

25:11-12

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## Introduction

Jeremiah was a prophet in Jerusalem from King Josiah's 13th year, which was the year 627 BC, until Jerusalem's destruction in the year 586 BC and for a few years after this. Consequently, he was a prophet in the last 40 years before the exile.

Jeremiah was the most autobiographical prophet, so we know more about him than about any of the other prophets. And he didn't have an easy life. He had few friends, was not allowed by God to marry because of the coming Babylonian invasion, was hated by all the people because of the message he brought, was imprisoned, and mistreated, and tried to quit being a prophet twice because he felt that God had tricked him. Jeremiah is often called "the weeping prophet".

For an unknown reason, the book is not chronological, although a basic chronology is present. The first 20 chapters seem to have taken place under King Josiah, and Jeremiah's first year as a prophet was therefore Josiah's 13th year, i.e., the year after Josiah's first reform (2 Chronicles 34:3). Jeremiah then contributed to this reform by calling the people to repentance to avoid the entire kingdom going down. He asked the people to repent more than 100 times to avoid this. Perhaps the doom was postponed a little because of King Josiah, who was the last good king in Judah.

After Josiah, it seems that God had lost patience with them, and in Chapter 21 he said the punishment was inevitable and that the only way to be saved was through exile. Those who accepted this punishment and thereby surrendered to the Babylonians would be allowed to live. Chapters 21-39 jump back and forth between Jehoiakim, one of the worst kings, and Zedekiah, Judah's last king, who was also not very good.

Then, after much judgment at first, Jeremiah began to speak more about salvation and restoration in Chapter 30. In this part, we find the important verses about the new covenant in Chapter 31. God would restore both Israel and Judah after the exile to establish a new covenant. Then everyone would know God and it would be much easier to keep the law.

The Babylonians captured Jerusalem in Chapter 39, and Chapters 40-45 are about the period after the destruction of Jerusalem and those who were left in the land. Jeremiah was then taken to Egypt against his will, and the story seems to end there.

What follows are words of judgment on the neighboring countries, so there is a partly thematic structure to the book as well. And the last nation to receive such a judgment was precisely the Babylonians. They would also be captured by an enemy later, and the people who were taken into exile could return. It ends with restoration for Judah; they would be allowed to return. The last chapter again goes back to the fall of Jerusalem, and this chapter is like the description in 2 Kings. It would be a kind of conclusion to the book and everything Jeremiah had warned them against.

Many verses point to Jesus in Jeremiah. There are specific verses such as 3:16 where they should not think about the ark anymore, 23:5-6 and 33:15 where a righteous sprout for David would come, 30:9 where there was also talk of a future David - and of course the new covenant promised in 31:31-34, a passage that constitutes the longest OT quotation in the NT when quoted in Heb 8.

But we can perhaps even see a bigger picture. The well-known "Rama cry" in 31:15 is used in Matthew 2 when Herod killed the male children in connection with the birth of Jesus, and Matthew said this then "was fulfilled". And it is indeed a surprising use of this verse, which in Jeremiah was used when the people were taken to Babylon. So how could this be fulfilled with Jesus?

The writers of the New Testament, and Jesus himself, clearly saw Jesus as the fulfillment of much more than just single verses. It seems that Matthew is saying that the people have been in exile ever since Babylon until Jesus came. Or said in another way: The return from exile pointed toward salvation in Jesus. Although the captivity in Babylon ended in 539 BC, the even more fundamental captivity was over when Jesus came. Consequently, Matthew seems to be saying that now, in Jesus, they will finally return home properly.

### Political situation

605 B.C.: Babylon defeated Egypt and became a world power. Judah fell under Babylon that same year. Part of the royal family, the aristocracy and Daniel were among those who were deported.

597 B.C.: Jehoiachin, Ezekiel and 10 000 were deported. Zedekiah was made king.

586 B.C.: The temple was destroyed, and only the poor were left. Zedekiah was taken but Jeremiah went free.

### Josiah (639-609)

Josiah’s reforms in 628 and 622 BC were not completed since Jeremiah continued to prophesy. Judgment was coming because of all the evil that Manasseh did, but Josiah would not live to see it.

### Jehoiakim (609-597)

Jehoiakim was Jehoahaz’s half-brother and Josiah’s eldest son. Neco changed his name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim. He was called the most ungodly and the worst among all of Judah’s kings. Judah became Babylon’s vassal in 605 and the first deportation took place.

### Zedekiah (597-586)

Zedekiah was the son of Josiah, the full brother of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin’s uncle. Nebuchadnezzar changed his name from Mattaniah to Zedekiah. He was not as opposed to Jeremiah as Jehoiakim had been. He was weaker, vacillating and in fear of his nobles. He planned a rebellion in 593 with Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. In 588 he conspired with Hophra, which led to the fall of Jerusalem. Zedekiah was blinded and deported.

### Original readers?

Did the book end up in Babylon with the Jews who were deported from Egypt in 562 (43:11-12, 46:19, Josephus)? At least Ch. 29 would have the exiles as its readers, and Ch. 50-51 was taken to Babylon.

A rabbinical account says that Jeremiah and Baruch were also deported, while in a late, unattested tradition mentioned by Tertullian, Jerome and others say he was stoned in Tahpanhes in Egypt.

Chapters 44:14 and 28, however, could mean that the survivors in Egypt would not go to Babylon but return to Judah. In that case, they were the ones who brought the book back to Judah during the exile. It is difficult to know who read it first: The exiles, the remnant in Judah or the Jews in Egypt.

## Repeated verses and ideas

### Uproot, tear down and destroy

*"See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."* (1:10)

*"If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed."* (18:7)

*"But the Lord has told me to say to you, ‘This is what the Lord says: I will overthrow what I* *have built and uproot what I have planted, throughout the earth."* (45:4)

### A fortified wall of bronze

*“Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land.”* (1:18)

*“I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you,” declares the Lord.”* (15:20)

### Turn the back to

*"They say to wood, ‘You are my father,’ and to stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ They have turned their backs to me and not their faces; yet when they are in trouble, they say, ‘Come and save us!’"* (2:27)

*"They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline."* (32:33)

*"Like a wind from the east, I will scatter them before their enemies; I will show them my back and not my face in the day of their disaster."* (18:17)

### Judah has as many gods as they have towns

*"Where then are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them come if they can save you when you are in trouble! For you, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns."* (2:28)

*"The towns of Judah and the people of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they will not help them at all when disaster strikes. You, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns; and the altars you have set up to burn incense to that shameful god Baal are as many as the streets of Jerusalem.’"* (11:12-13)

### God punishes them and avenges himself

*"Should I not punish them for this?” declares the Lord. “Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?" (*5:9)

*"Should I not punish them for this?” declares the Lord. “Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?" (*9:9)

*"Should I not punish them for this?” declares the Lord. “Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?"* (5:29)

### All are greedy and practice deceit, but they behave as if everything were well

*“From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them,” says the Lord.”* (6:13-15)

*“Therefore I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished, says the Lord.”* (8:10-12)

### Will be punished because they worship idols and burn their children as sacrifices

*"The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. Then the carcasses of this people will become food for the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away."* (7:30-33)

*"For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned incense in it to gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. “‘In this place I will ruin the plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, at the hands of those who want to kill them, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds and the wild animals."* (19:4-7)

*"They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin."* (32:35)

### Hope for peace and healing, but there is only terror

*"We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror." (*8:15)

*"Have you rejected Judah completely? Do you despise Zion? Why have you afflicted us so that we cannot be healed? We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror."* (14:19)

### The people will eat bitter food and drink poisoned water

*"Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “See, I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have known, and I will pursue them with the sword until I have made an end of them."* (9:15-16)

*"Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty says concerning the prophets: “I will make them eat bitter food and drink poisoned water, because from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has spread throughout the land.”"* (23:15)

### Leave the vengeance to God

*"But you, Lord Almighty, who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have committed my cause."* (11:20)

*"Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have committed my cause."* (20:12)

### Destined for punishment

*"And if they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ tell them, ‘This is what the Lord says: “‘Those destined for death, to death; those for the sword, to the sword; those for starvation, to starvation; those for captivity, to captivity.’"* (15:2)

*"He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword."* (43:11)

### God will bring them out of all the countries where he has banished them

*"However, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when it will no longer be said, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’"* (16:14)

*"So then, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when people will no longer say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ Then they will live in their own land."* (23:7-8)

### Terror on every side

*For this is what the Lord says: ‘I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword."* (20:4)

*"I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let’s denounce him!' All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying, 'Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him.'"* (20:10)

*"What do I see? They are terrified, they are retreating, their warriors are defeated. They flee in haste without looking back, and there is terror on every side,” declares the Lord."* (46:5)

*"Their tents and their flocks will be taken; their shelters will be carried off with all their* *goods and camels. People will shout to them, ‘Terror on every side!’"* (49:29)

*"Do not go out to the fields or walk on the roads, for the enemy has a sword, and there is terror on every side."* (6:25)

### A righteous King and Savior

*"'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior."* (23:5-6)

*"'In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.'"* (33:15-16)

### The wrath of the Lord against the wicked

*"See, the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked."* (23:19)

*"See, the storm of the Lord will burst out in wrath, a driving wind swirling down on the heads of the wicked."* (30:23)

### God’s punishment for Shiloh

*"Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel."* (7:12)

*Then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city a curse among all the nations of the earth."* (26:6)

### God is with Israel and will save them from exile

*"'So do not be afraid, Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel,' declares the Lord. ‘I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. I am with you and will save you,’ declares the Lord. ‘Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.’"* (30:10-11)

*"'Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel. I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant, for I am with you,' declares the Lord. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'"* (46:27-28)

### God’s covenant with Israel stands firm

*“This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord Almighty is his name: “Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,” declares the Lord, “will Israel ever cease being a nation before me.”* (31:35-36)

*"This is what the Lord says: ‘If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne."* (33:20)

*"This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’"* (33:25)

### Will chase Edom from its land

*"As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, along with their neighboring towns,” says the Lord, “so no one will live there; no people will dwell in it. “Like a lion coming up from Jordan’s thickets to a rich pastureland, I will chase Edom from its land in an instant. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me? And what shepherd can stand against me?”"* (49:18-19)

*“As I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah along with their neighboring towns,” declares the Lord, “so no one will live there; no people will dwell in it."* (50:40)

### The earth will tremble when the Lord punishes Edom and Babylon

*"Therefore, hear what the Lord has planned against Edom, what he has purposed against those who live in Teman: The young of the flock will be dragged away; their pasture will be appalled at their fate. At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble; their cry will resound to the Red Sea. Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom’s warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor."* (49:20-22)

*"Like a lion coming up from Jordan’s thickets to a rich pastureland, I will chase Babylon from its land in an instant. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me? And what shepherd can stand against me?” Therefore, hear what the Lord has planned against Babylon, what he has purposed against the land of the Babylonians: The young of the flock will be dragged away; their pasture will be appalled at their fate. At the sound of Babylon’s capture the earth will tremble; its cry will resound among the nations."* (50:44-46)

### God will defeat and silence the nations that he punishes

*"Surely, her [Damascus’] young men will fall in the streets; all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,” declares the Lord Almighty."* (49:26)

*"Therefore, her [Babylon’s] young men will fall in the streets; all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,” declares the Lord."* (50:30)

### God will make the people of Babylon drunk and then they will die

*"But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter— then sleep forever and not awake,” declares the Lord."* (51:39)

*"I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well; they will sleep forever and not awake,” declares the King, whose name is the Lord Almighty."* (51:57)

## Principles for interpreting prophets

*"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* (2 Pet 1:20-21)

Our basis should be the inspired interpretations in the NT:

### In Jer 31:31 in Heb 8:8-12 and 10:16-17. The new covenant is with *Israel and Judah*.

* *"The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah."* (Jer 31:31)
* *"But God found fault with the people and said: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my* *covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (Heb 8:8-12)
* *"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."* (Heb 10:16-17)

### Amos 9:11-12 in Acts 15:15-18 (with Zech 8:22, Jer 12:15, Isa 45:21)

*"In that day “I will restore David’s fallen shelter— I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins— and will rebuild it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom* *and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the Lord, who will do these things."* (Amos 9:11-12)

*"The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: “‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’— things known from long ago." (*Acts 15:15-18)

*"And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him."* (Zech 8:22)

*"But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to their own inheritance and their own country."* (Jer 12:15)

*"Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."* (Isa 45:21)

### In Hos 1:10, 2:23 in Rom 9:25-26 and 1 Pet 2:10.

*"Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God."* (Hos 1:10)

*"I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God."* (Hos 2:23)

*"As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” and, “In the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”"* (Rom 9:25-26)

*"Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."* (1 Pet 2:10)

### The root of Jesse/David (Is 11:1, 10) is Jesus in Rom 15:12, Rev 5:5, 22:16. Ezek 34 (my servant David), John 10 (The Good Shepherd).

*"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." (*Is 11:1)

*"In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious."* (Is 1:10)

*"And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope.'"* (Rom 15:12)

*"Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."* (Rev 5:5)

*"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."* (Rev 22:16)

*I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd."* (Ezek 34:23)

*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* (John 10:11)

### Zechariah 14:8, John 7: Jesus seems to say he is the eschatological rivers.

*"On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter."* (Zech 14:8)

*"Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive."* (John 7:38-39a)

### Conclusions

* It seems safest to see the restorations as either the return in 539 BC or a spiritual restoration.
* We should assume that the first fulfillment that fits is the fulfillment.
* We don’t have clear Biblical evidence for double historical fulfillments, but if they exist the second one is always Jesus.

## Chapter 3:14-18

"14 “Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion. 15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. 16 In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares the Lord, “people will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. 18 In those days the people of Judah will join the people of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your ancestors as an inheritance." (3:14-18)

Did some from Israel return with Judah in 539 BC?

* Chron. 9:3: People from Ephraim and Manasseh lived in Judah after 539.
* Chron. 31:6: People from the northern kingdom also lived in Judah before 586.
* Luke 2:36: Anna was from the tribe of Asher.

Vers 14: The temple in Zion will be for the whole nation again.

Vers 15: The post-exilic leaders.

Vers 16: The new covenant will come after 539.

Vers 17a: Salvation would come from Jerusalem and the Jews. A picture the hearers and readers would understand. The new covenant started in Jerusalem.

Vers 17b: All nations shall gather used messianically in Isa 11:10 and Zech 8:22. To the readers Jerusalem was still the greatest symbol of God’s presence on earth.

* *"In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious."* (Isa 11:10)
* *"And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him."* (Zech 8:22)

Vers 17c: The sending of the Spirit, or that the Gentiles will find God.

Vers 18a: “In those days” is usually used Messianic but historically in Ch. 5:18.

Vers 18b: The land of the north.

* Babylon in 6:22, 10:22, 16:15, 23:8, 31:8 and 46:10.
* In 50:9 it is Assyria.
* The only reference outside Jeremiah is Zech 2:6 (6:6-8), where it seems to refer to Babylon.
* Seems like he sees everything after 539 as one event and therefore goes back to 539 here. This could be supported with 1 Pet 1:11.

*"Trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow."* (1 Pet 1:11)

## “The ends of the earth”

*“The ends of the earth” is used in parallel with “the land of the north”* in 6:22.

* *"This is what the Lord says: “Look, an army is coming from the land of the north; a great nation is being stirred up from the ends of the earth."* (6:22)

Chapter 25:32: God’s judgment on the known world through Babylon.

* *"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation; a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth.'"* (25:32)

Chapter 31:8: Again using “the land of the north,” they would return from exile.

* *"See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labor; a great throng will return."* (31:8)

Chapter 50:41: Also here using “the land of the north,” they would be taken into exile in Babylon.

* *"“Look! An army is coming from the north; a great nation and many kings are being stirred up from the ends of the earth."* (50:41)

The ends of the earth = The land of the north = Babylonia.

## Chapter 7:31-32

“Ge ben-Hinnom” becomes “Gehenna” in Greek.

Topheth: The place in the valley of Ben Hinnom where children were offered to Molech. The word is thought to signify the place where the child was placed.

**The days are surely coming:**

Used historically: 7:32, 9:25, 16:14, 19:6, 23:7, 30:3, 31:27, 48:12, 49:2, 51:47, 52.

Used eschatologically: 23:5, 31:31, 33:14.

In 586, so many would die that they would have to use the valley as a cemetery instead of making sacrifices to Molech.

*“Ge ben-Hinnom”* becomes *“Gehenna”* in Greek. Gehenna presented such a vivid image that Christ used it as a symbolic depiction of hell: A place of eternal torment and constant uncleanness, where the fires never ceased burning and the worms never stopped crawling (Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:47–48).

The place in the valley of Ben Hinnom where children were offered to Molech is called *“Tophet / Topheth”* in Isaiah 30:33. The word is thought to signify the place where the child was placed.

## Chapter 13:1-11: The useless linen belt

*"This is what the Lord said to me: “Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water.” So I bought a belt, as the Lord directed, and put it around my waist. Then the word of the Lord came to me a second time: “Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks.” So I went and hid it at Perath, as the Lord told me. Many days later the Lord said to me, “Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there.” So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless. Then the word of the Lord came to me: “This is what the Lord says: ‘In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt—completely useless! For as a belt is bound around the waist, so I bound all the people of Israel and all the people of Judah to me,’ declares the Lord, ‘to be my people for my renown and praise and honor. But they have not listened.’"* (13:1-11)

Perath (v. 4) is often used for the Euphrates, but it runs about 560 km north of Anathoth. NIV has “Perath”, most other translations have Euphrates.

Jeremiah was away from Jerusalem for part of Jehoiakim’s reign, and perhaps he met Nebuchadnezzar then and therefore was treated well in 39:11-12.

*"Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard: 'Take him and look after him; don’t harm him but do for him whatever he asks.'"* (39:11-12).

Calvin and others believe it was enacted as a vision. Others suggest it refers to Wadi Pharah (symbolically called Perath?) about 6 km north of Anathoth (Josh 18:23). Some think it is Ephrata, the original name of Bethlehem, the first consonant omitted.

Like the linen belt is close to the body, Israel was chosen to be close to God.

It was a symbol of how the intimacy between God and his people was gone. They had chosen to run away from him. Now they were ready for destruction - without God they were worthless.

## Don’t pray for them

Chapter 14:7-9: Jeremiah intercedes for the people.

Chapter 14:10-12: God does not listen at all and tells Jeremiah not to pray for them (for the third time).

Chapter 14:19-22: He intercedes for them anyway.

Chapter 15:1-6: God is tired of his people.

## Jeremiah wants to quit 1

Jeremiah feels his life sucks: *“Alas, my mother, that you gave me birth, a man with whom the whole land strives and contends! I have neither lent nor borrowed, yet everyone curses me.”* (15:10)

Chapter 15:11: *"The Lord said, “Surely I will deliver you for a good purpose; surely I will make your enemies plead with you in times of disaster and times of distress."* (Fulfilled in 21:1-2).

* *"The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said: 'Inquire now of the Lord for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the Lord will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us.'"* (21:1-2)

Chapter 15:12: *"Can a man break iron — iron from the north — or bronze?"* Will they not be able to stand against the Babylonians? Or is it a reminder of the promise in 1:18-19? (15:20)

* *"Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord."* (1:18-19)
* *"I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you,” declares the Lord."* (15:20)

Chapter 15:13-14: *"Your wealth and your treasures I will give as plunder, without charge, because of all your sins throughout your country."* Was this said to the people and not to Jeremiah? Or was God saying if Jeremiah quit now, he would be taken into exile with the rest of the people?

Chapter 15:15-18: What Jeremiah said can be paraphrased as: *“But I’m taking all this for you, God! I embraced this ministry, but you have tricked me! You didn’t tell me that it would be like this!”*

Chapter 15:19-21: It sounds like Jeremiah quit *("Therefore this is what the Lord says: “If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me;"* v. 19a). God showed him grace, reminded him of his promise to deliver him, and said he should have spoken worthy, not worthless, words.

## Jeremiah wants to quit 2

Chapter 20:7-8: *"You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long."*

Chapter 20:9: *“But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”* Even though he wanted to, he was not able to quit. It was more tiresome keeping the words back than to speak them.

Chapter 20:11-13: He knew God would deliver him: *“But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced; their dishonor will never be forgotten. Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have committed my cause. Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.”*

Chapter 20:14-18: He was tired of his life, but he was not able to quit. *“Cursed be the day I was born! … Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?”*

He cared more about God’s word than his own welfare, even though this surely bothered him. He went through a lot for the people who did not listen anyway.

## Were they gathered from several nations in 539?

Would return from many lands/nations: 16:15, 23:3, 8, 29:13-14 (!), 32:37.

Would be scattered to several places/nations: 8:3, 9:16, 24:9, 29:18, 30:11.

The Jews were scattered to Moab, Ammon, and Edom. All the countries returned to Judah after 586: 40:11-12, 43:5, 46:28.

*"The remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered."* (43:5b)

## The potter (18:1-11)

Chapter 18:7-8: *“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.” Refers to 1:10: “See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”* They were facing destruction but would be restored if they repented. The disaster could be averted, God could change his mind, and Jeremiah’s words might not have come true after all.

Chapter 18:9-10: This also works the opposite way - if those destined for good do evil, God would change his mind and destroy them. *“And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”*

There is an “if” all the way; the prophecies do not have to come true. The main point is not that God can give us a new start, but that he does what he wants with the clay depending on faith. The idea is repeated in Rom 9:21 where Paul uses it to justify God’s actions, implying that God can save whoever he wants: *“Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?”*

## Years 586-539 = 70 years? (25:11)

*"This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years."* (25:11)

Spoken in 605 (25:1 *“The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.”*).

Not primarily that Judah would be in exile for 70 years, but “these nations” (v. 9) would serve Babylon for 70 years. (Also 29:10)

*"This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place."* (29:10)

Babylon would be the world power for 70 years counting from 605. If the number was meant to be a round one, it could fit with the 66-68 years that elapsed until 539/538.

Daniel 9:2: The destruction of Jerusalem seems to be connected to the 70 years that Babylon would rule, that it would not be reinhabited while Babylon was in charge.

*"In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years."* (Dan 9:2)

Also 70 years from 586 until the rededication of the temple in 516, but neither Jeremiah nor Daniel was talking about the temple here. They were talking about the city and the land that would be devastated.

## Letter to the exiles (29:4-23)

Vers 2: To those taken away in 597.

Verses 5-6: Covenant blessings.

Vers 7: *"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*

* Seek the welfare of the city + pray for it = your welfare.
* Most of them liked it so much that they didn’t want to return in 539.

Vers 11: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

* God’s plans for the exiles were good and not for their destruction.
* The meaning of this verse is not that God had a plan for everyh individual, but it is used collectively for the whole people in exile. The corresponding meaning could be more like God’s plans for a heavenly future for us.

**Application:**

As exiles on earth, we should seek the welfare of our society and invest in it. We should plan even though Jesus can come back tomorrow.

Don’t get so tangled up in our worldly affairs that we forget our real home.

## Chapter 30:3-11: 539 or Jesus?

*"In that day,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them."* (30:8)

Vers 8a: *“In that day”* is used historically in 4:9.

Vers 8b: *“No longer”* doesn’t have to mean “never again” but could just mean that they will be set free, as in 539.

Vers 9: They will eventually serve the Messiah, after 539? They had to return for the Messiah to come. Or is it all Messianic?

**Verses 10-11:**

*"So do not be afraid, Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. I am with you and will save you,’ declares the Lord. ‘Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.’"* (vv. 10-11)

Parallel in 46:27-28, where the context is the historical judgment on Egypt:

*“Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel. I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant, for I am with you,” declares the Lord. “Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only in due measure; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.”* (46:27-28)

Is this all Messianic because they didn’t live in peace after 539? (Calvin)

## The new covenant (31:31-34)

Vers 31: The new covenant was with both Israel and Judah.

Both those who returned and those who were lost and were mixed with Gentiles. It is not revealed that Gentiles are included here. Can “Israel and Judah” then be Messianic language sometimes?

Verses 33-34 contains the main characteristics of the new covenant. The law would be put within them and would be written in their hearts: They would relate to it in a new way. It would be easier to keep. They would all know God: There would be no king or priesthood between God and his people except Jesus. God would have the same relationship with everyone. This did not mean that teaching would not be necessary (cf. Paul’s letters), this had to do with how God’s people knew God.

## Chapter 31:35-36

Will the Jews always exist as a people/nation since the covenant would be without value if they disappeared? History seems to confirm this interpretation, and it would show the faithfulness of God to his promises.

Will the church always exist? Usually in the NT the term “children of Abraham” is used for the church, it is not that clear that “Israel” is used for the church (but see 1 Cor 10:18, Phil 3:5).

*"Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?"* (1 Cor 10:18)

*"Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;"* (Phil 3:5)

Same idea in 33:20-25: Did it favor physical Israel?

*"This is what the Lord says: ‘If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne."* (30:20-21)

## Jehoiakim burns the scroll (Ch. 36)

Vers 1

* His 4th year was 605-604 BC, and the scroll is read in his 5th year (v. 9).
* After Babylon had become the world power in 605 BC, they marched down the coast of Palestine and captured the Philistine city of Ashkelon (late 604 BC, corresponds with the 9th month in v. 9) with massive destruction and huge deportation.
* This triggered fear in Judah. Perhaps the reason for the fast (v. 9). Did they believe God would help or was it a religious last resort?

Vers 3: God’s goal was repentance.

Vers 16: One of the very few times that the people listened.

Vers 23: *"Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe’s knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire."* Did the king think this would nullify the prophecies? He should have repented, instead he showed contempt for the word of God.

Burning Bibles is a serious action. You show contempt for the word of God, and you show no sympathy with people who are persecuted and killed for having a Bible. Consider that people have died to make the Bible available in other languages than Latin.

Vers 30: *"Therefore this is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night." Did* God cut off his own promise of the Messianic line? The same about Jehoiachin in 22:30: *“This is what the Lord says: “Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.”"*

Was this about the whole line or just his son? Zedekiah was a son of Josiah. Joseph was a descendant of Jehoiachin. Was Mary a descendant of David through Nathan (Luke 3:31) to avoid this curse on the line of Solomon?

Did it mean that Jesus would get the right to the throne by being Joseph’s adopted son while having the bloodline through Mary?

How did Jehoiakim die?

* Josephus said Jehoiakim died when he was thrown over the wall of Jerusalem.
* It could mean he was deported in 2 Chron. 36:6.
* Jeremiah 22:19 and 36:30 could agree with 2 Chron. if *“outside Jerusalem”* is taken to mean way outside Jerusalem - in Babylon.

## Oracles to the nations

Chapter 1:5: *"I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

Shows that God cared about them. They were not left in their own world. The point of bringing Ch. 50-51 to Babylon was to reveal God to them.

Parallels to Judah’s exile and restoration. God cared about other nations also in the OT (Amos 9:7: *“'Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?' declares the Lord. 'Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?’”*).

The main reason for the judgment was their pride and arrogance. They trusted more in themselves than in God.

Babylon took:

* Ashkelon (probably in 604).
* Kedar and Hazor (probably in 599-598).
* Elam in 597.
* Ammon and Moab in 582.
* Egypt in 568.
* Edom (probably in 552).
* Damascus (unknown time).

## Applications

The masses are not necessarily right.

*“The only thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history.”* If we learn from our past, we can make our failures into something positive.

We should be careful with saying *“God told me...”* This could be taking the Lord’s name in vain. God does not like false prophets.

God’s patience is shown in all the repetitions of the very same subject. For instance, he gave them MANY chances to repent, we must also reflect God's character and show grace to others.

Do we go to church as a religious habit, like the people who came to the temple? That can be good for us but is of no value and doesn’t make us holy.

Sometimes “peace, peace, peace” is not what a wound needs, but “repent”. We need to disinfect it, not just put a band-aid on top.

Shouldn’t it be allowed to criticize Israel when that was very needed in the OT?

Jeremiah did the work of God because he knew that the times were critical. What is critical now?

### Applications from Jeremiah’s Life

Don’t make fun of “weird” Christians.

God can use our emotions and sensitivity, yet we can still learn to be strong.

Jeremiah was not postmodern but stuck to one thing.

Don’t let the world tell you whether your life is a success or not. Perhaps even other Christians will think you are silly for choosing to live on a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) base in a remote place, perhaps being single, doing something you believe in, being a Jeremiah, instead of getting a “real” job, a house, a car and a family.

## Man Against World

*Song by Survivor*

“Have you ever walked alone at night Like a man against the world

No one takes your side A boat against the tide

When your faith is shaken You start to break

And you heart can’t find the words Tossed upon the sand

I give you a man against the world

All the people cheer ‘til the end is near And the hero takes a fall

Then they’ll drag you through the mud You’re only flesh and blood

Now I’ve walked the path From dark to light

And they’ve yet to come to terms Alone I take my stand

I’m only a man against the world

But love, like a distant reminder It tugs at my shoulder

It calls me home

I shout, can a single voice carry

Will I find sanctuary within your arms Someday when the answer’s clearer Someday when I even the score

You’ll reach and you’ll find me near you Right beside you, forever more

But for now I’ll walk the night alone Like a man against the world

A brand new day will shine Through the avalanche of time Now the road’s grown long But the spirit’s strong

And the fire within still burns Alone I take my stand

I give you a man against the world.”