

Jeremiah

Major Prophets · Biblical Prophets

Born to a priestly family in Anathoth, Jeremiah son of Hilkiah received his prophetic call as a youth during Josiah's thirteenth regnal year (627 BC), ministering through Judah's final convulsive decades until Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC. God's word came to him before his birth: 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.'

His forty-year ministry spanned the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, witnessing the nation's moral collapse despite brief reformation under godly Josiah. Called to proclaim unpopular messages of certain judgment, Jeremiah suffered rejection by his family, persecution by religious and political leaders, imprisonment in a miry dungeon, and profound emotional anguish over his people's impenitence.

His prophecies alternate between impassioned pleas for repentance and stark predictions of Babylonian conquest, yet even in darkest judgment he proclaimed God's ultimate purpose of restoration. The promise of a New Covenant written upon the heart, not on tablets of stone, represents one of Scripture's most glorious Messianic predictions. His personal sufferings—rejected by his people, cast into a pit, forbidden to marry, hated without cause—prefigure Christ's passion in remarkable detail. The book of Lamentations preserves his anguished dirges over Jerusalem's fall, while his prophecies predicted both the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and subsequent return.

Note: Jeremiah's use of symbolic acts includes wearing a yoke, burying a linen belt, remaining unmarried, and purchasing a field during the siege—all dramatizing his prophetic messages. Tradition states he was stoned to death in Egypt by Jewish refugees who fled there against his counsel. His scribe

Baruch preserved his oracles, which King Jehoiakim burned, prompting divine judgment and re-dictation with additions. The prophet's emotional transparency—his 'confessions' reveal inner turmoil—makes him Scripture's most psychologically accessible prophet.

Key Verses

Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah 1:9

Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Jeremiah 9:1

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Jeremiah 31:31

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:33

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.