

Jeremiah

The Fruitless Prophet

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Lesson 1 - Introduction

Jeremiah 1:1

Date: 14 October 2020 - Jer20

1. National Setting

- a. In the year **721**, the Assyrians conquered Israel and led them into captivity (2Ki 17:1-4).
- b. The Assyrians proceeded to invade and conquer many of the cities of Judah. In **701**, in answer to Hezekiah's prayer, the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers that surrounded Jerusalem (2Ki 19:35-36).

2. Jeremiah's Birth

- a. During the reign of wicked King Manasseh, in about **648**, Jeremiah was born. He may have been the same age as King Josiah and the prophet Zephaniah. The prophet Habakkuk was a just few years older.
- b. His father was Hilkiah, priest of Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin (Jer 1:1).

3. Jeremiah's Call into the Ministry

- a. God called Jeremiah to prophecy when he was about 20-21 years old, in about the year **627**.
- b. He ministered from the 13th year of Josiah until the nation was carried into Babylonian captivity (Jer 1:2-3). This was a total of 41 years.
- c. He had a difficult ministry because the people of Judah were living ungodly lives and did not want him preaching to them. His message was to warn the people of Judah of the coming Babylonian captivity if they refused to repent.
- d. Though his ministry was one of almost constant persecution and danger, he remained faithful to the Lord. **This should be an encouragement to us. Living for the Lord and serving Him can be difficult, but we must remain faithful no matter what comes.**

4. His Faithful Service (see also King James Bible Commentary)

- a. Jeremiah served under **Josiah** (640-609).
 - 1) Josiah was the last good king of Judah. About five years after God called Jeremiah to preach, **623**, Josiah repairs temple (age 26) (2Ch 34:8-13; 2Ki 22:3-7). The priest Hilkiah finds the book of the Law (Deuteronomy) (2Ch 34:14-20; 2Ki 22:8-13). This sparked the last great revival in Judah.
 - 2) **622** Jeremiah chapters 7-10 Josiah tries to purify the land. Jeremiah chapters 11 and 12 deal with "Josiah's Covenant" (2 Chr. 34:32).

- 3) **612** Medes and Babylonians combine to conquer Nineveh. The last Assyrian ruler, Ashur-uballit II retreats west into Haran. Nineveh is destroyed according to Nahum's prophecy from 663-654 BC
- 4) In **609** when Josiah was killed in battle, Jeremiah lamented (2Ch 35:25), (Jer 22:10, 13-17).
 - b. Jeremiah served under **Jehoahaz** (608).
 - 1) **608** Jehoahaz, 23 years old, becomes king for three evil months. Jehoahaz is Josiah's middle son. (2Ch 36:1-2)
 - 2) Jeremiah mentions Shallum (i.e., Jehoahaz) (Jer 22:11-12).
 - c. Jeremiah served under **Jehoiakim** (608-597).
 - 1) **608** Pharaoh Neco makes Josiah's oldest son Eliakim (age 25) King of Judah and renames him Jehoiakim (2Ki 23:34-37; 2Ch 36:4-5; Jer 22:11-12).
 - 2) **606** Habakkuk is written
 - 3) **605** Jeremiah is about 43 years old; Daniel is about 23 and Ezekiel is about 17 (Dan 1:1-13; Jer 46:2; 52:28-30).
 - 4) **604** Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's book. Jeremiah rewrote the book and pronounced judgment on Jehoiakim (Jer 36:27-32).
 - 5) **598** Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon and was bound in fetters in preparation for going Babylon 2Ch 36:6-8]
 - d. Jeremiah served under **Jehoiachin** (597).
 - 1) **597** Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin becomes king at age 18 (2Ki 24:6, 8-9). Jeremiah prophecies to Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:20-30.
 - 2) He surrendered and was carried to Babylon.
 - e. Jeremiah served under **Zedekiah** (597-586).
 - 1) **597** Josiah's third son, Zedekiah, becomes king at the age of 21 (2Ki 24:15-18)
 - 2) Nebuchadnezzar heads back to Babylon with 10,000 more captives which include Ezekiel and Jehoiachin (2Ch 36:10; 2Ki 24:15-17).
 - 3) Jeremiah's persecution reached its climax under Zedekiah, especially during the long Babylonian siege.
 - 4) **586** All food in Jerusalem is gone. Nebuchadnezzar takes the city.
 - f. Jeremiah served under **Nebuchadnezzar** (586).
 - 1) Jewish rebels forced him to go to Egypt with them.
 - 2) Tradition states that the Jews stoned him in Egypt.

Truly, Jeremiah was a fruitless prophet. He had no converts. The people rejected his preaching. He had but few friends. His ministry seemed like a failure, yet he faithfully fulfilled God's will. **He is no failure who fulfils the will of God.**