

Analysis of Jeremiah

General

By far Jeremiah is the most self-revealing for all the prophets. More is known about the life and ministry struggles of Jeremiah than any other prophet of God. No other prophet allows such an intimate glimpse into his thoughts and life.

Authorship

While chapter 52 of Jeremiah was probably added after the death of the prophet, the prophet Jeremiah (or his amanuensis Baruch) was responsible for the authorship of the book (Dillard and Longman, pp. 288, 290).

Date

Keeping with a date that is consistent with a Jeremiah authorship, a date after 586 BC could be suggested when Jeremiah compiled his book (prior to his death). Approximately forty years later the events of chapter fifty-two transpired. This chapter was added to the book of Jeremiah after the death of Jehoiachin (52:34).

Key Issues

Key issues in Jeremiah are: 1) to determine the implications of the “new covenant,” 2) to note that God will be faithful to the covenant (Deut. 28-32) and discipline His people for their disobedience, 3) to understand divine discipline, deliverance and restoration as it concerns the people of God, 4) to understand that God is sovereign over all nations, 5) to appreciate the life and times of a prophet of God, 6) to note the difference in length between the LXX and the MT text of Jeremiah and the duplication of some material (“chs. 7 and 26; 25 and 36,” Childs, p. 342), 7) to recognize the corruption and stubbornness of the human heart to the message of God through His prophet.

Subject/Purpose Statement

The book of Jeremiah explains in graphic details the terrible consequences of the people’s lack of repentance to the prophet’s message from God. Because the people of God would not turn from their idolatry, injustice and general lack of obedience to the covenant, God brought divine discipline in the form of the Babylonians. The book of Jeremiah explains why God’s people suffered the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple and exile. But while the people languished in a foreign land God would not forget his people. There was coming a promised time of restoration for the remnant of Israel.

Outline of Jeremiah

- The calling and commission of God's prophet, Jeremiah (1:1-19).
 - Jeremiah called by God (1:1-10).
 - Jeremiah's divine protection while carrying the divine message (1:11-19).
- God's word of judgment through Jeremiah because of Judah's sin (2:1-29:32).
 - God's judgment against idol worship (2:1-6:30).
 - God's judgment against the people's false trust in the temple (7:1-10: 25).
 - God's judgment because the people failed to keep the covenant (11:1-15:21).
 - God's judgment because the religious leaders failed to keep the covenant (16:1-20:18).
 - God's rebuking message to the kings (21:1-24:10).
 - God's sure judgment of exile upon all the people (25:1-29:32).
- God's word of restoration through Jeremiah because of God's faithfulness to the covenant (30:1-33:26).
 - God's promise of future restoration (30:1-31:40).
 - God's promise of restoration illustrated (32:1-33:26).
- God's judgment of Israel's exile becomes a reality (34:1-45:5).
 - God's word: a second chance forfeited (34:1-22).
 - God's word: obey Me and escape with your life (35:1-39:18).
 - God's word: obey Me and serve the Chaldeans (40:1-43:13).
 - God's word: to the disobedient in Egypt (41:1-45:5).
- God's judgment against the nations (46:1-51:64).
 - God's judgment against Egypt (46:1-28).
 - God's judgment against Philistines (47:1-7).
 - God's judgment against Moab (48:1-47).
 - God's judgment against Ammon, Edom, Damascus (49:1-39).
 - God's judgment against Babylon (50:1-51:64).
- God's word through Jeremiah proved true (52:1-34)

Theological Issues

A few theological aspects found in Jeremiah are: God's holiness, His judgment, His clear communication with His people, His faithfulness, His mercy and grace, His power, His sovereignty, His plan of salvation; man's stubbornness, his lack of obedience, his idolatry, man's special place in God's heart, his hope is found in God alone.

Theological Application

For Jeremiah God was a holy God and Israel was a wicked people. Jeremiah demonstrated that although God is a God of mercy, His mercy does have an ending point. The window for divine mercy will not be opened forever. Although God's mercy may have an end, God is faithful to keep His covenant to David through the Messiah and to extend grace to the remnant of His people with a new covenant.

The books of Jeremiah and Lamentations demonstrate conclusively that God is the One who caused Israel's destruction and He will have to be the One to restore her.