

Author - STEVEN R. DOUGLAS 2017

THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 24

JEREMIAH



The Prophet Jeremiah by Michelangelo

SUMMARY

Jeremiah is the son of Hilkiah, of the priests of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. He prophesied from the days of Josiah to the captivity. The Lord tells him he was sanctified in the belly to serve. Jeremiah is anxious he is a child and cannot speak.

The Lord touches his mouth, so he will be a prophet unto the nations. The Lord's plans are compared to the branch of an almond tree – comes to fruit quickly. Jeremiah sees a boiling pot facing the north – an evil shall break forth from the north against the inhabitants of Judah. Jeremiah will be protected as he prophesies.

Although pious when it first entered the promised land, Israel has forsaken the Lord and gone after other gods. Its own backslidings will be its punishment. From a right seed, Israel has become a degenerate vine. It says to wood, 'You are my father,' and to stone, 'You gave me birth.' Israel sinfully presumes itself to be innocent.

Israel is compared to an adulterous husband. In the days of Josiah, the Lord complains about the high places in Israel, and about how Israel was punished. Judah, far from taking Israel's as a cautionary tale, played the harlot also, and turned to the Lord only feignedly. Appeal for Israel to acknowledge transgressions and be restored. All nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem.

The Lord appeals to the men of Judah and Jerusalem to circumcise their hearts. Mourn and repent – an evil is coming from the north. The land will be despoiled. The Lord creates the universe.

Judah's inequities recounted. It will be destroyed by a strange nation whose tongue is unknown. The Lord will not protect it.

Jerusalem will be made desolate and punished for its transgressions by a nation from the north. This nation is cruel and will have no mercy. Repent.

Jeremiah told to stand at the temple gates and order those entering to repent. The Lord complains that the temple has become a den of robbers. The Lord will do to the temple what he did to Shiloh. The people perform offerings in an unacceptable foreign manner. There are high places in Judah. The voice of mirth shall go from Judah and Jerusalem.

The bones of the kings, princes and priests of Judah shall be exhumed and left for dung upon the face of the earth. The stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

The land will become barren. Serpents and cockatrices shall bite. Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me – it is ambiguous whether Jeremiah of God says this.

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! The people will be scattered among the heathen and given wormwood and gall for sustenance.

Let not the wise or the mighty glory in their powers. Let he who glories glory in the Lord.

SUMMARY Continued

The circumcised will be punished alongside the uncircumcised – Israel is uncircumcised in its heart.

The house of Israel acts idolatrously, consulting the heavens, worshipping trees, making graven images. False gods have not made the heavens and the earth. The Lord both suffers and is also full of destructive anger.

The Lord reminds Judah of the consequences of breaking the Mosaic covenant. Judah is a green olive tree which will be burnt, and its branches broken. The Lord will punish by sword and famine the men of Anathoth who seek Jeremiah's life.

The wicked take root and grow. The Lord has left His heritage, which has been spoiled. His people have sown wheat but shall reap thorns. After they have been plucked from the land, they will be restored to their heritage. This promise is conditional upon obedience, however.

The Lord tells Jeremiah to place his girdle in the hole of a rock at the Euphrates. After a couple of days, it is marred. After this manner the Lord will mar the pride of Judah. The house of Israel and Judah cleaved unto me as a girdle cleaves unto a man but is now good for nothing.

The elite of Judah will destroy each other in drunkenness. Give glory to the Lord, before he changes light to darkness. Can an Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?

Jeremiah surveys the famine, and admits iniquities on behalf of his people, providing a model of repentance. The Lord tells Jeremiah not to pray for his people. False prophets are rebuked. Jeremiah prays on behalf of the people once more.

The sword, famine and captivity are promised, as punishment for the sins of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah. Widows shall mourn and languish. Jeremiah complains about being made to deliver such unwelcome messages, for which too he is reproved. Jeremiah pleads his sincerity and asks pardon. God promises to protect him.

Due to the evils which threaten, Jeremiah is forbidden to marry or have a family, or to share in the joys and sorrow of his neighbors, which will be forgotten in the calamities that their sins will bring on them. A future restoration is intimated, however, and the conversion of the Gentiles foretold.

Judah is fatally inclined to idolatry. The happiness of the man that trusts in the Lord is contrasted with the man that trusteth in man. God alone knows the deceit and wretchedness of the heart of man.

A comparison is made between a bird's hatching the eggs of another species, which will soon forsake her, and the vanity of ill-acquired riches. Jeremiah talks of his sincerity and prays that the evil intended him by his enemies may revert on their own heads. An appeal to observe the Sabbath is made.

The house of Israel is like clay in the hands of a potter. The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem are invited to repent; their refusal as unnatural as someone preferring the snowy Lebanon or barren rock to a fruitful plain,

SUMMARY Continued

or other waters to the cool stream of the fountain. A conspiracy is formed against Jeremiah, who appeals to God, and curses his enemies.

Judah and Jerusalem will be broken as a potter's vessel, because they have forsaken the Lord. The land will be made desolate, and the people will eat the flesh of their children.

Pashur, governor of the temple, smites Jeremiah and places him in the stocks. When Jeremiah is taken from the stocks, he curses Pashur, and tells him he will die in captivity. Jeremiah resolves to prophesy no more, but the word of the Lord is in his heart like a burning flame, and he is not able to forbear. In a very Job-like manner, Jeremiah curses the day he was born.

Vision when Zedekiah was king – advice to submit to Nebuchadnezzar's forces and live, rather than fight against them and die. Those who stay in the city shall die, but those who go out and submit to the Chaldeans shall live.

The king of Judah must execute judgment and righteousness and protect the needy. If he does not, his house shall become a desolation. Thou, Judah, are Gilead to me. All nations shall marvel at the desolation.

Shallum (Jehoahaz) the son of Josiah will die a captive. Coniah (Jeconiah) the son of Jehoiakim will be given to them that seek his life, and his seed will be forever excluded from the throne.

Woe to those that have scattered the sheep of the Lord's pasture. A king shall arise from the branch of David, and he shall be called the King of Righteousness. Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; I reel like a drunken man.

The priests and prophets of Judah are wicked, and divine vengeance is hanging over them. The people should not listen to their false promises: they will face ruin, as will all scoffers of true prophecy.

A vision after Jeconiah had been taken away captive: good figs and bad figs. The good figs symbolize those the Lord shall preserve in captivity, and the bad figs Zedekiah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem, and those that dwell in Egypt.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. Because Judah has not hearkened to the prophets, it will be captive in Babylon for seventy years.

After these seventy years, the king of Babylon will himself be punished. All nations are made to drink of a cup of wine, become drunken, spew, fall and rise no more. The dead shall not be lamented or buried.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah makes a call to repentance in the court of the temple. This house shall be like Shiloh. The priests and people take objection to this, but the memory of Micah, who persuades Hezekiah to repent, stays their hands.

SUMMARY Continued

Jeremiah is protected by Ahikam the son of Shaphan. Another prophet, Urijah, prophesies against the city. He flees to Egypt, but Jehoiakim's men bring him before the king and slay him.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the reign of Jehoiakim. The Lord tells Jeremiah to put bands and yokes upon his neck, and to send them to the neighboring countries who want Judah to join in a war against Babylon.

Submission to Babylon is advised – do not listen to false prophets and dreamers. Those who submit will be allowed to live in their own land. Zedekiah is advised not to war against the Babylonians.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the reign of Zedekiah. Hananiah breaks Jeremiah's yoke, and says that in the same way, the Lord shall break the yoke of the Babylonians. The Lord replies that a yoke of wood may be broken, but not the yoke of iron which will be imposed. Hananiah dies as a punishment for his rebellion against the Lord.

Message to captives: build houses, have children and settle – the captivity will last for seventy years. Jeremiah speaks against two false prophets, Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah, who prophesied a speedy end to the captivity. He also rebukes Shemaiah the Nehelamite, who complains about Jeremiah's message.

Promise of restoration. David will be restored unto Judah. Peace and prosperity. They that devour thee shall be devoured...Ye shall be my people, and I shall be your God.

The northern kingdom will be restored. Rachel is represented rising from her tomb, lamenting, but then being consoled by the thought of future restoration. Ephraim repents, and is reconciled. Peace and prosperity returns to the posterity of Jacob – no more sour grapes.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the tenth year of the reign of Zedekiah, during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is imprisoned, and God tells him to redeem a field in Anathoth through his cousin Hanameel.

The contract is delivered to Baruch. The contract is used by God as a sign that the Jews will once more possess their land after the Babylonian captivity. An everlasting covenant will be made.

Word comes to Jeremiah in prison. Israel and Judah will be restored to the favor of God, so all the world shall be astonished. A Lord of righteousness shall come from the branch of David, ensuring happiness and stability under his government.

Word comes to Jeremiah when Zedekiah is fighting against Babylon. Judah will be given to the Babylonians, yet Zedekiah shall die in peace.

A further prophecy, reproving the Jews for their conduct towards their Hebrew slaves, whom they released in times of danger, but compelled to return to bondage when they thought the danger over. God threatens them with the sword, pestilence, and famine, and with the return of the Chaldeans.

SUMMARY Continued

The Lord commends and blesses the Rechabites, who obey their father in not drinking wine, sowing seed or building their own houses. Their obedience is contrasted with Judah and Jerusalem.

Word comes to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Using Baruch as his scribe, Jeremiah writes down his prophecies. Baruch reads them publicly upon a fast day in the temple. The princes hear him, and resolve to tell the king, hearing of this, while advising both Jeremiah and Baruch to hide.

Jehoiakim has the roll thrown into the fire, and orders Jeremiah and Baruch to be seized. The Lord conceals them, however. Jeremiah rewrites the roll and denounces the burning of the roll.

Zedekiah succeeds Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, in Judah, and does evil in the sight of the Lord. The king sends a message to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah replies, foretelling the return of the Chaldean army, who will take and burn the city.

Jeremiah, in attempting to leave Jerusalem, and retire to his possession in the country, is seized as a deserter, and cast into a dungeon. The king, after a conference with him, abates the rigor of his confinement.

The princes of Judah, taking offense at Jeremiah on account of his predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, cause him to be cast into a deep and miry dungeon. Ebed-Melech, an Ethiopian, gets the king's permission to take him out. Jeremiah advises the king, who consulted him privately, to surrender to the Chaldeans. The king promises that he will not put Jeremiah to death and requires the consultation secret.

In the ninth year of Zedekiah, Jerusalem is broken up by the Babylonian forces. Zedekiah is blinded, and his sons killed. Jeremiah is spared and sent home to dwell among his people. Ebed-Melech is also spared.

Jeremiah puts himself under the jurisdiction of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, who has been made the governor of Judah. Johanan acquaints the governor of a conspiracy against him, but he is not believed.

Ishmael (of royal seed) executes his conspiracy against Gedaliah and his companions and attempts to carry away the Jews who were with him captives to the Ammonites. Johanan recovers them, however, and proposes fleeing with them into Egypt.

Johanan and the remnant of the people desire Jeremiah to ask counsel of God what they should do. Jeremiah says they will be safe in Judah, but face destruction in Egypt. Jeremiah reproves their hypocrisy in asking advice they have no intention of heeding.

The leading men, discrediting Jeremiah's prophecy, carry the people into Egypt. Jeremiah places stones at the entry of the Pharaoh's house and says Nebuchadnezzar shall set his throne on them. Nebuchadnezzar shall array himself with Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment.

Jeremiah reproves the Jews in Egypt for continuing in idolatry (such as burning incense to the queen of heaven) after the judgments already visited by God for this sin.

SUMMARY Continued

Jeremiah rebukes their refusal to reform, declares that they will be destroyed along with Egypt.

Baruch (who had read Jeremiah's prophecies in the temple in chapter 36) is in anguish regarding the destruction of Judah, but is assured that the Lord will build what he has broken down, and also that his life shall be preserved.

The prophet sees the preparation of Pharaoh Necho for the battle of Carchemish. In their confidence of victory, the Egyptians are like a river overflowing its banks. However, they will be defeated, as the Lord decreed by the river Euphrates. The Egyptians will be overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar after his siege of Tyre. The Jews will be eventually returned to divine favor.

Destruction from the north (from Babylon) predicted for the Philistines. The Babylonians are compared to an overflowing flood.

Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away. Moab punished for its complacency and pride. How is the strong staff broken! Moab has magnified itself against the Lord.

Destruction prophesied for the Ammonites, Edom (whose fall is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah), Damascus, Hazor and Elam. The Lord will appoint the time. The heart of the mighty men of Edom shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

Babylon will fall at the hands of a nation from the north, and Israel restored.

Babylon will be destroyed by the Medes. All shall be broken in pieces. The daughter of Babylon is like threshing floor, it is time to thresh her. Babylon will be brought as a lamb to the slaughter; it will become a dwelling place for dragons.

Jeremiah instructs Seraiah (the chief priest) to read this prophecy in Babylon, then bind a stone to the prophecy and throw it in the Euphrates to demonstrate that Babylon shall sink.

An account of the defeat of Zedekiah by the Babylonians. Sons killed, Zedekiah blinded, Jerusalem looted. The way Jehoiachin is treated in his captivity improves.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 9:23** *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;*
- 9:24** *But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*
- 15:20** *And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you," says the Lord.*
- 15:21** *I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible.*

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 17:5** *Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the Lord.*
- 17:6** *For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.*
- 17:7** *Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord.*
- 17:8** *For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.*
- 17:9** *The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?*
- 17:10** *I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*
- 20:11** But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.
- 31:22** *How long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth-- A woman shall encompass a man.*
- 43:10** *and say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden. And he will spread his royal pavilion over them.*
- 43:11** *When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt and deliver to death those appointed for death, and to captivity those appointed for captivity, and to the sword those appointed for the sword.*

CHARACTER Definitions

JEREMIAH - Jeremiah the prophet lived in the final days of the crumbling nation of Israel. He was, appropriately, the last prophet that God sent to preach to the southern kingdom, which comprised the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

God had repeatedly warned Israel to stop their idolatrous behavior, but they would not listen, so He tore the 12 tribes asunder, sending the 10 northern tribes into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians.

Then God sent Jeremiah to give Judah the last warning before He cast them out of the land, decimating the nation and sending them into captivity in the pagan kingdom of Babylon.

Jeremiah, a faithful, God-fearing man, was called to tell Israel that, because of their unrepentant sin, their God had turned against them and was now prepared to remove them from the land at the hands of a pagan king whom He called "My servant".

No doubt Jeremiah, who was only about 17 when God called him, had great inner turmoil over the fate of his people, and he begged them to listen.

CHARACTERS Continued

He is known as the weeping prophet, because he cried tears of sadness, not only because he knew what was about to happen, but because no matter how hard he tried, the people would not listen.

Furthermore, he found no human comfort. God had forbidden him to marry or have children, and his friends had turned their backs on him. So, along with the burden of the knowledge of impending judgment, he also must have felt very lonely.

God knew that this was the best course for Jeremiah, because He went on to tell him how horrible conditions would be in a short time, with babies, children, and adults dying grievous deaths, their bodies unable to even be buried, and their flesh devoured by the birds.

Obviously, the people of Israel had become so hardened by the numbing effects of sin that they no longer believed God, nor did they fear Him. Jeremiah preached for 40 years, and not once did he see any real success in changing or softening the hearts and minds of his stubborn, idolatrous people.

The other prophets of Israel had witnessed some successes, at least for a little while, but not Jeremiah. He was speaking to a brick wall; however, his words were not wasted. They were pearls being cast before swine, in a sense, and they were convicting every person who heard them and refused to heed the warning.

Jeremiah tried to make the people understand their problem was a lack of belief, trust, and faith in God, along with an absence of fear which caused them to take Him for granted. It is very easy to be lulled into a false sense of security, especially when the focus is not on God.

The nation of Israel, just like many nations today, had stopped putting God first, and had replaced Him with false gods, those that would not make them feel guilty or convict them of sin. God had delivered His people from bondage in Egypt, had performed miracles before them, and had even parted the waters of the sea for them.

In spite of all these displays of God's power, they returned to the false practices they had learned in Egypt, even making vows to the false queen of heaven, along with performing the other rites and rituals that were part of the Egyptian culture and religion. God finally turned them over to their idolatry, saying, Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows!.

Jeremiah's constant loneliness and isolation finally got the best of him, and he became discouraged.

He sank into a quagmire where many believers seem to get stuck when they think their efforts are not making a difference and time is ticking away. Jeremiah was emotionally spent, even to the point of doubting God, but God was not done with him.

Jeremiah 15:19 records a lesson for each believer to remember in those times when he feels alone, useless, and discouraged and whose faith is wavering: Therefore this is what the LORD says: If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.

CHARACTERS Continued

God was saying to Jeremiah, come back to Me, and I will restore to you the joy of your salvation. These are similar to the words penned by David when he repented of his sin with Bathsheba.

What we learn from the life of Jeremiah is the comfort of knowing that, just like every believer, even great prophets of God can experience rejection, depression, and discouragement in their walk with the Lord.

This is a normal part of growing spiritually, because our sinful nature fights against our new nature, that which is born of the Spirit of God, according to Galatians 5:17: For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.

They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But just as Jeremiah found, we can know that the faithfulness of our God is infinite; even when we are unfaithful to Him, He remains steadfast.

Jeremiah was given the task of delivering an unpopular, convicting message to Israel, one that caused him great mental anguish, as well as making him despised in the eyes of his people.

God says that His truth sounds like foolishness to those who are lost, but to believers it is the very words of life. He also says that the time will come when people will not tolerate the truth. Those in Israel in Jeremiah's day did not want to hear what he had to say, and his constant warning of judgment annoyed them.

This is true of the world today, as believers who are following God's instructions are warning the lost and dying world of impending judgment. Even though most are not listening, we must persevere in proclaiming truth in order to rescue some from the terrible judgment that will inevitably come.

JOSIAH— Josiah was the king of Judah from approximately 640 to 609 B.C. His reign in Jerusalem is discussed in 2 Kings 22–23 and 2 Chronicles 34–35. Josiah was the son of King Amon and the grandson of King Manasseh—both of them wicked kings of Judah.

Yet Josiah was a godly king and known as one of the world's youngest kings; he began his reign at age 8 after his father was assassinated. A highlight of Josiah's reign was his rediscovery of the Law of the Lord.

Second Kings 22:2 introduces Josiah by saying, And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, he raised money to repair the temple, and during the repairs the high priest Hilkiyah found the Book of the Law. When Hilkiyah read it to Josiah, the king tore his clothes, a sign of mourning and repentance (verse 11).

King Josiah called for a time of national repentance. The Law was read to the people of the land, and a covenant made between the people and the Lord: The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep

CHARACTERS Continued

his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant.

Many reforms followed. The temple was cleansed from all objects of pagan worship, and the idolatrous high places in the land were demolished. Josiah restored the observance of the Passover and removed mediums and witches from the land.

Second Kings 23:25 records, Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.

God's wrath would later come upon Judah due to the evil King Manasseh had done, but the judgment was delayed because of Josiah's godly life and leadership. Josiah died in battle against the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. King Josiah was buried in Jerusalem in his own tomb, and his son Jehoahaz took the role of king.

Much can be learned from Josiah's life that is positive. First, Josiah shows the influence a person can have from a very young age. Even children have enormous potential to live for God and to have great impact.

Second, Josiah lived a life fully committed and obedient to God and was blessed for it. Third, Josiah properly responded to God's Word. By the time he became king, the Scriptures had long been neglected, and Josiah's heart was smitten by the failure of his people to honor God's Word.

Josiah had Scripture read to the people and made a commitment to live by it. Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken . . . I also have heard you, declares the Lord.

BIBLE TIMELINE

627 BC	The Call of Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1
627 BC	Jeremiah Declares Judah Forsakes God	Jeremiah 2 - 6
627 BC	Jeremiah's Message at the Temple Gate	Jeremiah 7 - 10
622 BC	Jeremiah Proclaims God's Covenant	Jeremiah 11, 12
609 BC	Jeremiah Proclaims Covenant Is Broken	Jeremiah 13 - 20
609 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Egypt	Jeremiah 46
609 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Philistia	Jeremiah 47
594 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Moab	Jeremiah 48
594 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Ammon	Jeremiah 49
588 BC	Jeremiah's Conflicts	Jeremiah 21 - 33
588 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Judah	Jeremiah 34 - 45
586 BC	The Fall of Jerusalem	Jeremiah 52
586 BC	Jeremiah Prophesies against Babylon	Jeremiah 50, 51

MAP REFERENCES

