

A Series of Sobs

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #65



Objective: To understand the times and the message of Jeremiah.



“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. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.”

—Jeremiah 29:11-14

Jeremiah was called “the weeping prophet” because of how much his prophecies are filled with tears and lamentation. In fact, the poem he wrote after the book of Jeremiah is called “Lamentations.” It describes the devastation of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

The fall of Jerusalem was a catastrophe that stretched over a period of nearly 20 years. Jeremiah ministered for a total of 41 years, during which he warned of the impending catastrophe and then witnessed all three of Babylon’s invasions. He was hated by kings and false prophets because his message was so harsh, but he spoke the truth. He also prophesied that God’s people would return from captivity after 70 years.

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah wrote several prophecies of the coming Messiah. This message of hope would be not only for Judah, but also for the whole world. He preached that meaning and fulfillment could only be found in knowing God.



1. True or false? The book of Jeremiah is very well organized.
2. True or false? Jeremiah wrote impersonally, as someone who was objective and detached from the events he wrote about.
3. True or false? Jeremiah only ministered during the reign of one king—about seven years.
4. True or false? God’s people were very sympathetic toward Jeremiah for his weeping.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. During the reign of Josiah, when Jeremiah ministered, what was rediscovered when the temple was being remodeled?
 - a. The lost ark of the covenant
 - b. The remains of another temple underneath the new one
 - c. Much of the wealth Solomon had hidden
 - d. Scrolls of God’s Word, which had been forgotten
6. Why did the fall of Jerusalem take such a long time?
 - a. God’s armies were very strong and kept repelling the attacks.
 - b. Because of rebellious kings, God’s judgment increased in severity over time.
 - c. Jerusalem and Babylon kept trying to negotiate a peace, but could never come to terms.
 - d. God could not decide whether to judge or forgive His people.
7. Which of the following sums up Jeremiah’s message?
 - a. “God has rejected Israel and has now chosen Babylonians to be His people.”
 - b. “If you build up your army, you will be able to defeat Babylon.”
 - c. “Defeat and captivity are certain, but God will bring you back in 70 years.”
 - d. “God has not yet made up His mind what to do, so He may not judge you if you repent.”
8. What did Jeremiah advise Jerusalem’s leaders to do when Babylon attacked?
 - a. Surrender
 - b. Compromise
 - c. Flee to Egypt
 - d. Trust God and be courageous and fight
9. What visible illustration did Jeremiah use to represent the Jews’ captivity and return?
 - a. A flower in springtime
 - b. A camel returning from the desert
 - c. A piece of pottery that has been broken and repaired
 - d. His own illness and recovery

10. What effect did the captivity have on Judah's idolatry?
- They decided to worship idols because God had forsaken them.
 - They found better idols to worship in Babylon.
 - They saw how important it is for every culture to have its own gods.
 - They never worshiped idols again.
11. How did Jeremiah feel about the message God had given him?
- He grew weary of preaching it.
 - He was grateful that God had trusted him with such an important message.
 - He never complained about the hardship it brought him.
 - He enjoyed being useful to God.
12. What did Jeremiah promise when God's people were being chained and taken into captivity?
- God would never forgive them for what they had done.
 - God had good plans to give them hope and restore them.
 - God would hide from them until the time of the Messiah.
 - They would be happy and successful in Babylon.
13. What is the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet?
- A true prophet preaches good news, and a false prophet preaches bad news.
 - A true prophet is always popular, and a false prophet is always hated.
 - A true prophet must die as a martyr.
 - The words of a true prophet always come true. The words of a false prophet often do not.



Have you ever knowingly been disciplined by God? How difficult was it to submit to His will? What promise does God give to those who experience His loving discipline?



Thank God that He has a wonderful plan for your life to give you hope and a future. Thank God that He cares enough about His children to correct and discipline us. Ask Him to teach you His will and train you in His ways.



Going Deeper

1. What was the essence of the message of Jeremiah before the Babylonian armies arrived on the scene? _____

2. How did the essence of that message change when the Babylonian armies showed up? _____

3. Have you ever experienced a personal application of the essential message of Jeremiah regarding a “captivity” and restoration that purged sin out of your life? Explain. _____

4. The word “rehabilitation” in its Latin root form means “to invest again with dignity.” That was an integral part of the message of Jeremiah. Do you have a need to apply that part of his message to your life today? In other words, do you have a personal need for any kind of rehabilitation? (Consider Jeremiah 29: 11-14 NIV) Explain. _____

5. Why was Jeremiah hated so intensely by those to whom he preached? _____

6. One of Jeremiah’s greatest sermons is recorded in chapter 9: 23 - 24. Why does he preach that we should not try to find our fulfillment in wisdom, riches, or physical strength, but in knowing God? What attributes of God does Jeremiah tell us can lead us to a personal knowledge of God? _____

7. If you have been finding the meaning of life in anything other than knowing God, how could you apply this magnificent sermon of Jeremiah to your personal pursuit of God? _____
