

A Trek Through Jeremiah - 1:1-3

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September 7, 2025

About the class

- Same time as the other class: 9:15 - 10:15. Start and end on time.
- If not meeting, please join other class.
- Smaller class so we can get to know each other. Prayers at the start; please share.
- Not a lecture. Discussion encouraged.
- Approach: a trek: not cover everything in detail but see the high points
- Using the Legacy Standard Bible. NASB update by Grace Seminary.
- Notes will be published online on the church website under Sunday School Materials.

For today

- Introduction to Jeremiah: the man, his situation, his book.
- Lots of Scriptures. Focus on the big picture.

Introduction 1:1-3

Jeremiah 1:1-3 (LSB)

1The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,

2to whom the word of Yahweh came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

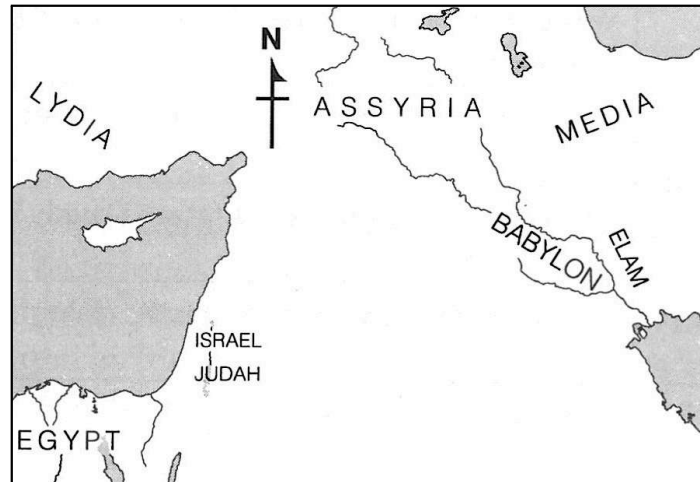
3And it came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

- The man: Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin
 - Background
 - Son of Hilkiah. Maybe the Hilkiah who found the Book of the Law in the temple (2 Ki 22:8).
 - Probably descended from Abiathar of the priests of Nob, who helped David but then was exiled to Anathoth by Solomon (1 Ki 2:26-27). Abiathar was descended from Eli, priest at Shiloh who raised Samuel (1 Sam 14:3, 22:20; 1 Ki 2:27).
 - Date of birth: Around 640 BC near the end of Manassah's reign.
 - Place of birth: Anathoth about 3 mi north of Jerusalem
 - Childhood unknown. Well-taught in the law and Israel's history. Familiar with messages of previous prophets. Especially influenced by Hosea (125y earlier in Israel).
 - Occupation unknown. No evidence of priestly training or service. Had means; able to buy a field (32:6-15).

- Person
 - More personal information than any other prophet.
 - Reluctant when called because of his youth and inability to speak (1:6).
 - Man alone.
 - Forbidden to marry (16:2)
 - No evidence of disciples. Only known companion was his scribe Baruch.
 - Endured social rejection, active opposition, constant persecution from the people he loved. Even his own village and family plotted to kill him (11:18-23).
 - Took refuge in his personal relationship with Yahweh.
 - Man of sorrow
 - Fervent patriot but called to proclaim Yahweh's judgment on the nation he loved.
 - No repentance so lived forty years in anticipation of judgment which finally came in the destruction of Jerusalem and exile to Babylon.
 - Man of turmoil
 - Experienced emotional turmoil which expressed itself in periodic outbursts.
 - Lamenting his birth
 - 15:10 Woe to me, my mother, that you have borne me...
 - Accusing Yahweh of abandoning him
 - 15:18 Why has my pain been perpetual And my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will You indeed be to me like a deceptive stream With water that is unreliable?

- Man of courage.
 - Relentlessly fulfilled his prophetic mission of calling a disobedient people back to Yahweh.
 - Strengthened by Yahweh
 - 1:18 "Now behold, I have given you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land..."
 - Compelled to speak His message
 - 20:8-9 "...for me the word of Yahweh has resulted In reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, "I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot prevail.
 - Trusting in his God
 - 20:11 But Yahweh is with me like a ruthless mighty one; Therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.
- Type of Christ
 - Similar historical setting: sent to a nation about to fall.
 - Similar message: repent and return to the true God
 - Both rejected by the people
 - Both condemned by the religious leaders.
 - Both tried, persecuted, imprisoned
 - Both loved the nation Israel and wept over Jerusalem
 - Both had unusual fellowship with God

- His situation: to whom the word of Yahweh came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. And it came in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.



- Jeremiah called 626 BC. In his late teens. One year after Josiah started his reforms. He saw both the end of Manassah's wicked reign and the start of Josiah's godly reign.
- When Jeremiah began his ministry, the main powers in the Middle East were Assyria, Egypt and Babylon. Assyria supreme. Judah a vassal of Assyria.
- During his ministry the Assyrian Empire collapsed, Judah became independent for a short time, then was a vassal of Egypt, then a vassal of Babylon, then ceased to exist when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were exiled.

- Rulers of Judah
 - Jeremiah prophesied more than 40y under five kings and a governor. Only the major ones mentioned in the text.
 - Josiah 639-609 BC
 - Son of Manassah. Ruled 31y
 - Freed Judah from Assyria. Godly man who sought to return Judah to worship of Yahweh.
 - Jehoahaz 609 BC
 - Son of Josiah. Ruled three months then deposed by Pharaoh Necho.
 - Jehoiakim 609-597 BC
 - Brother of Josiah. Installed by Pharaoh Necho. Ruled 11y.
 - Worst king of Judah. Tyrant who cared nothing for social justice. Returned Judah to the pagan practices of Manassah.
 - Favored Egypt. Assassinated in Jerusalem during the siege by Babylon.
 - Jehoiachin 597 BC
 - Son of Jehoiakim. Teenager. Ruled three months then exiled to Babylon for thirty-seven years.
 - Ungodly; followed his father's policies.
 - Zedekiah 597-586 BC
 - Son of Josiah. Ruled 11y.
 - Weak and vacillating. Vassal of Babylon but unable to control his officials who favored Egypt.
 - Exiled to Babylon when Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed.
 - Gedaliah (586-? BC)
 - Governor of Judah under Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem
 - Assassinated by Ishmael, member of the royal family.
- Events
 - Judah had been a vassal of Assyria since 745 BC when Ahaz appealed to them for help.
 - In 640 BC Josiah became king of Judah. During his reign the Assyrian empire was collapsing, and Egypt and Babylon were rising. Josiah made Judah independent again and expanded her territories. He also instituted religious reforms to restore the worship of Yahweh.
 - Jeremiah began his ministry in his late teens in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. He saw Manassah's idolatry and Josiah's godliness. During Josiah's ministry he preached against the idolatry and false trust of the nation. He did not mention Josiah's reforms. He likely supported them but saw that the people's hearts were unchanged.

- In 609 BC Josiah was killed at the battle of Megiddo. Jeremiah lamented his death. His son Jehoahaz became king but was deposed three months later by Pharaoh Necho. Jeremiah gave no messages during his reign.
- Jehoahaz' brother Jehoiakim became king as an Egyptian vassal. He was one of Judah's worse kings, a tyrant who reintroduced pagan practices. Jeremiah opposed Jehoiakim both politically (he counseled submission to Babylon) and spiritually (he called for repentance and return to Yahweh). His Temple Address (in which he said that the temple would be destroyed if the nation did not repent) brought widespread condemnation.
- In 605 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the Egyptian army at the battle of Carchemish and assumed leadership of the world. Jehoiakim transferred his allegiance to Babylon.
- In 601 BC Egypt defeated a Babylonian invasion. Jehoiakim switched his allegiance back to Egypt. Jeremiah continued to call for return to Yahweh and submission to Babylon.
- In 598 BC Babylon again invaded Judah and Jehoiakim was assassinated and replaced by Jehoiachin. Three months later in 597 BC Jerusalem fell. The king and court and leading citizens and much booty were taken to Babylon. Judah became a vassal of Babylon.
- Babylon installed Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah as ruler. He was a weak ruler fearful of public opinion and under the control of his nobles. Jeremiah continued to preach repentance and submission to Babylon. Zedekiah listened to his counsel but refused to follow it.
- In 589 BC Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon. Jeremiah continued to counsel submission to Babylon.
- In 587 BC Babylon invaded Judah and conquered Jerusalem. Zedekiah and most of the citizens of Judah were deported to Babylon and the city and temple were destroyed. Jeremiah was treated well by the Babylonians.
- Judah became a province of Babylon with Gedalia as governor. He was friendly towards Jeremiah, who counseled the remaining Jews to remain in Judah and submit to Babylon.
- Gedalia was assassinated by Ishmael (a member of the royal family). He was driven out by Johanan. Jeremiah counseled remaining in Judah and submitting to the Babylonians but Johanan and the Jews fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them. There Jeremiah continued to call for repentance but his messages were rejected. He likely died in Egypt in the midst of a people who remained unrepentant.

- His Book: The words of Jeremiah
 - Author
 - Some believe multiple authors over a long period
 - My position: Jeremiah authored and edited ch 1-51 with scribal assistance from Baruch. He added ch 52 (fall of Jerusalem) using material from 2 Ki 24:18 - 25:30.
 - Structure
 - Anthology of Jeremiah's prophecies. Organization not clear.
 - Generally organized by subject
 - Introduction and call 1
 - Prophecies concerning Judah 2-45
 - Prophecies regarding the nations 46-51
 - Jerusalem's fall 52 (almost identical with 2 Ki 24-25)
 - Organization within subject not chronological, not clear
 - Style
 - Simplicity of language
 - Repetition. Because the people would not change.
 - Content: oracles, biographical narratives, prose discourses. Poetry and prose in equal portions.
 - Imagery, anthropomorphism, illustrations from nature
 - Conversations with Yahweh

- Themes
 - God is worthy
 - Living and everlasting
 - 10:10 But Yahweh is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.
 - Creator of the world
 - 10:12 It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.
 - Lord of history
 - Of Israel
 - 2:4-7 Hear the word of Yahweh...Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness...into the fruitful land To eat its fruit and its good things.
 - Of the nations
 - 27:5-7 I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant...All the nations shall serve him...
 - Both transcendent and immanent
 - 23:23-24 "Am I a God who is near," declares Yahweh, "And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares Yahweh. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares Yahweh.
 - Holy
 - 51:5 ...the Holy One of Israel
 - Knows the hearts of men and rewards them according to their deeds
 - 17:10 "I, Yahweh, search the heart; I test the inmost being, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his deeds.
 - Loves His people
 - As husband: 2:2 "I remember concerning you the lovingkindness of your youth, The love of your betrothals...
 - As father: 3:19 How I would set you among My sons...'You shall call Me, "My Father
 - Eternally: 31:3 I have loved you with an everlasting love;
 - Idols. Nothing
 - 2:5 vanity
 - 2:11 not gods
 - 2:13 broken cisterns
 - 2:28 powerless to save
 - 10:11 will perish

- Israel is God's people
 - The nation
 - Elect
 - Chosen:
 - 33:24 The two families which Yahweh chose... (Israel and Judah)
 - Holy:
 - 2:3 "Israel was holy to Yahweh, The first of His produce."
 - His beloved 11:15; 12:7
 - His vineyard 12:10
 - His inheritance 12:7-9
 - His flock 13:17
 - Apostate
 - Responded to Yahweh's lovingkindness with apostasy
 - 2:7 "I brought you into the fruitful land To eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, And My inheritance you made an abomination.
 - Rebellious
 - 2:20 "For long ago I broke your yoke And tore off your bonds; But you said, 'I will not serve!'"
 - Unfaithful
 - Image of harlotry. As Hosea. 2:20 For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.
 - Image of an animal in heat. 2:24 A wild donkey... That sniffs the wind in her passion. In the time of her heat who can turn her away? All who seek her will not become weary; In her month they will find her.
 - Unrepentant.
 - 5:3 ...they refused to receive discipline. They have made their faces stronger than rock; They have refused to repent.

- Having false security
 - Trusting in the law of Moses
 - 8:8 ...'We are wise, And the law of Yahweh is with us
 - Trusting in ritual
 - 6:20 Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, And your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me.
 - Trusting in circumcision
 - 9:25 ...all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised
 - Trusting in prayer
 - 11:14 ...I will not listen when they call to Me because of their calamity.
 - Trusting in the throne of David
 - 22:2 ...O king of Judah, who sits on David's throne...
 - Trusting in the house of Yahweh (the temple)
 - 7:14 ...the house which is called by My name, in which you trust...
- Deceived by false priests and prophets
 - 6:13-14 ...from the prophet even to the priest Everyone practices lying. "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace.
- Due for judgment
 - 5:6 Therefore a lion from the forest will strike them down; A wolf of the deserts will devastate them; A leopard is watching their cities. Everyone who goes out of them will be torn in pieces Because their transgressions are many; Their acts of faithlessness are mighty.

- The individual
 - Expected to know Yahweh personally and be like Him
 - 9:24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am Yahweh who shows lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares Yahweh.
 - Can find Yahweh by seeking Him whole-heartedly
 - 29:13 ‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.
 - Now has a wicked heart
 - 17:9 “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can know it?
 - One day will have a new heart
 - 24:7 I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am Yahweh; and they will be My people, and I will be their God...

- Covenant, sin, repentance
 - Yahweh had made a covenant with His people but Israel had broken the covenant.
 - 11:10 “They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have walked after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I cut with their fathers.”
 - They must repent and turn back to Yahweh. If they did, they would find mercy.
 - 36:3 Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I devise to bring on them, in order that every man will turn from his evil way; then I will forgive their iniquity and their sin.”
 - Turn from. Heb swb. Used much by Jeremiah.
 - As they continued to harden their hearts, judgment became inevitable
 - 38:18 ‘But if you will not go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given over to the hand of the Chaldeans; and they will burn it with fire, and you yourself will not escape from their hand.’”
 - Jeremiah to Zedekiah as Babylon was besieging Jerusalem.

- Future hope
 - Israel will be restored
 - After exile, peace and hope
 - 29:10-11 “For thus says Yahweh, ‘When seventy years have been fulfilled for Babylon, I will visit you and establish My good word to you, to return you to this place. ‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares Yahweh, ‘plans for peace and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.
 - Exiles regathered
 - 31:8 “Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth...A great assembly, they will return here.
 - Return to the land
 - 30:3 ‘For behold, days are coming,’ declares Yahweh, ‘when I will return the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.’ Yahweh says, ‘I will also cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’”
 - Jerusalem rebuilt
 - 30:18 ...the city will be rebuilt on its ruin, And the palace will sit on its just place.
 - Prosperity in the land
 - 31:12 “They will come and sing for joy on the height of Zion, And they will be radiant over the goodness of Yahweh— Over the grain and the new wine and the oil, And over the young of the flock and the herd
 - A new covenant
 - 31:34-34 “Behold, days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “when I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people...I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
 - A Davidic King
 - 33:15-16 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and prosper And do justice and righteousness in the land...And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘Yahweh our righteousness.’

- The nations
 - Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (1:5). Ch 46-50 is messages to them.
 - All nations will be destroyed
 - 46:28 ...I will make a complete destruction of all the nations Where I have banished you...
 - All nations will be gathered to Jerusalem and be transformed
 - 3:17 "At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of Yahweh,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of Yahweh; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.

References

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Thompson, J. A., *The Book of Jeremiah* in Eerdmans's Classic Biblical Commentaries, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980