

Jeremiah's Song

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet sources)

Introduction:

A. Jeremiah the Prophet

1. Jeremiah - Hebrew: יֵרֵמְיָהוּ, Greek: Ἰερεμίας, meaning "Jehovah Exalts",
2. Also called the Weeping Prophet, he is considered the second of the major prophets of the Old Testament.
3. Jeremiah is credited with writing the Book of Jeremiah, 1Kings, 2Kings and the Book of Lamentations, with the assistance of Baruch son of Neriah, his scribe and student; and, he is frequently quoted in the New Testament, and beloved by the Jews.
4. He was the son of Hilkiah, a kohen or Jewish priest, from the village of Anathoth. He had a happy childhood, and was called to be a prophet in his mid to late teens in 626 BC. He resisted the prophetic call by explaining that he was only a child and did not know how to speak.
5. He prophesied of Jerusalem's destruction because Judah had been unfaithful to the covenant and forsaken God by worshiping the Baals. They built altars to Baal to burn their children as offerings.
6. Jeremiah's ministry began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, king of Judah and lasted until after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's Temple. This period spanned the reigns of five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.
7. In his early ministry, Jeremiah was primarily a preaching prophet, but in his later years, God instructed him to write down the early oracles and other messages for later generations.
8. Jeremiah's ministry prompted others to plot against him - Jer. 11:21-23
9. Physical persecution started when the priest Pashur ben Immer, a temple official, sought out Jeremiah to have him beaten and put him in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin for a day - Jer. 20:1-2
10. During the reign of King Zedekiah, The Lord instructed Jeremiah to make a yoke of the message that the nation would be subject to the king of Babylon and that listening to the false prophets would bring a much worse disaster. The prophet Hananiah opposed Jeremiah's message. He took the yoke off of Jeremiah's neck, broke it, and prophesied to the priests and all the people that within two years the Lord would break the yoke of the king of Babylon, but the Lord spoke to Jeremiah saying "Go and speak to Hananiah saying, you have broken the yoke of wood, but you have made instead a yoke of iron" - Jer. 28:13
11. After Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would be handed over to the Babylonian army, the king's officials, including Pashur the priest, tried to convince King Zedekiah that Jeremiah should be put to death because he was discouraging the soldiers and the people. Zedekiah did not oppose them. The king's officials took Jeremiah and put him down into an abandoned cistern, where he sank down into the filth. Their intent was to kill Jeremiah by allowing him to starve to death in a way that would allow the officials to claim to be innocent of his blood. Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian

rescued Jeremiah by petitioning the king pulling him out of the cistern, but Jeremiah remained imprisoned until Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian army in 587 BC - Jer. 38

12. Johanan eventually was given leadership of the remnant of Judah in Palestine. Refusing to listen to Jeremiah's prophecy, Johanan fled to Egypt, taking with him Jeremiah and Baruch, and the king's daughters, from whence none of them ever returned. There, the prophet probably spent the remainder of his life, still seeking in vain to turn the people to God from whom they had so long revolted. There is no record of his death or grave, and it is believed that he died unwept.

13. He is the prophet who saw the glorious new covenant - Jer. 31:31-34

B. Jeremiah is the prophet who lived in tragedy; his only comfort was his trust in God - Lam. 3:21-25

1. Received an unwanted call to minister - Jer. 1:5-6.

2. Called to a ministry of prophesying nothing but judgment - Jer. 1:9-10.

3. He was forbidden to marry so that he might give himself completely to proclaiming the judgment of God; he lived in loneliness - Jer. 16:1-13.

4. He wept openly about the sins of his people - Jer. 9:1-2.

5. He endured depression when his message went unheeded for most of his life. He came to the point where he tried to abandon his ministry

a. Jer. 20:7-9

b. His work spanned more than 50 years, but there is no record of a single convert.

6. He was imprisoned by the king because he did not approve of Jeremiah's preaching - Jer. 32:5.

a. Even while the Babylonians were invading the city, Jeremiah was sitting in the dungeon - Jer. 32:2.

b. Kings, captains, the crowds, and even other prophets came to him asking for the word of the Lord. When he told them something they didn't want to hear, they would mock him as a doomsayer or a liar

7. After Jerusalem fell and many killed or taken captive, he did not gloat. Instead, he becomes heart-broken with the remnant and goes into suffering with them in Egypt where he died unnoticed

a. Lam. 1-5; Jer. 42

C. After enduring a life like this; after being rejected, hated, mocked, imprisoned, ignored; after seeing his beloved Jerusalem ransacked, desecrated and destroyed; after experiencing the horror of war, the brutality of the enemy and the pangs of hunger, after bearing with betrayal by the last remnant of Judah in the land and carried away to Egypt to die an unlamented old man, Jeremiah was still able to stand forth amid the rubble of the city and among the bodies of the dead and lift his voice in praise to God for His great, unfailing faithfulness to His people.

1. Lam. 3:18-26

2. It is possible that these are among the last words he ever wrote.

3. How could he say that? - Heb. 11:32-39

4. This has been the introduction to next Sunday morning's sermon: "God Is Faithful"