

Jeremiah: Messages of Judgment and Hope

Introduction

I've got some bad news, and I've got some good news. So God might have told Jeremiah when God called Jeremiah to be a prophet. In the short term, Jeremiah's message was almost uniformly bad. God was going to send judgment on the people of Judah because of their sins. This judgment would occur at the hands of the Babylonians, who would conquer Judah in a vicious manner.

Jeremiah served as God's faithful prophet from approximately 627 BC, when God called him to prophesy, to sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. For the first several decades of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, the only news Jeremiah had to deliver was bad news. The news kept being bad because the people and their leaders kept refusing to respond to God. Then, just when the worst was coming to pass and the Babylonian army was at the gates of Jerusalem, Jeremiah began to tell the good news. God was not abandoning the people forever. God would redeem them, bring them back to their land, and give them a new life.

Which of these kinds of news would you like to hear—or deliver? The answer for most people is pretty easy—the good news, of course. Be aware, though, that as with the nation of Judah, we may need to hear and respond to the bad news before the good news means very much to us.

Let us listen carefully to God's message as we study Scripture passages from the Book of Jeremiah. These passages have been selected to help you grasp the message of the Book of Jeremiah. Too, although the Book of Jeremiah is not arranged in chronological order, the sessions have been selected to help to provide a sense of the chronology of the time in which Jeremiah prophesied.

Unit 38 God's Message of Judgment

These four sessions are intended help us pay attention to God's message of judgment on the people of Judah because of their unfaithfulness to him. The first session deals with Jeremiah's call (Jeremiah 1). The second considers one of the most famous passages in the Book of Jeremiah, often referred to as Jeremiah's temple sermon (Jeremiah 7:1-15). Jeremiah pulled no punches in this sermon. The third session focuses on Jeremiah's delivering God's message of warning to the nation's governmental and religious leaders (22:1-5, 13-17; 23:9-18). The fourth session is set in the time when the nation was only months from being conquered. It contrasts the courageous faithfulness of Jeremiah and the weakness of King Zedekiah (37:1-2, 6-17; 38:14-23).

15-38-01-en	Called to a Difficult Task	Jeremiah 1:1-19
15-38-02-en	When Trust Is Misplaced	Jeremiah 7:1-15
15-38-03-en	Warning Unfaithful Leaders	Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-17; 23:9-18
15-38-04-en	Responding Courageously	Jeremiah 37:1-2, 6-17; 38:14-23

Unit 39 God's Message of Hope

At last we come to the good news in the Book of Jeremiah. In the very darkest days of the nation of Judah, Jeremiah began to deliver God's message of hope. Both of these sessions remind us that God provides help and hope just when it seems neither is available and only darkness lies ahead.

15-39-05-en	When the Worst Is Happening	Jeremiah 32:1-15
15-39-06-en	It's a New Day	Jeremiah 31:27-34