



**FOUNDATIONS
OF FAITH**

The Message of the Bible

Week 19: Jeremiah & Lamentations

The Structure of Jeremiah

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The Teaching of Jeremiah

Jeremiah's Call (Jer 1)

1. Jeremiah ministered from the time of Josiah to the time of the exile. He prophesied from 627/26 B.C. to 587/86 B.C. ... 40 years.
2. Jeremiah's call summarizes his whole message, commissioned by God to speak His words to Judah and the nations (vv. 9–10).
3. One of his primary messages is that one from the north would enter and destroy the land (v. 14).

Prophecies of Judgment (Jer 2–25)

1. Since Judah failed to learn from the example of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), they were judged to be more guilty (3:11).
2. Though guilty of unfaithfulness to the covenant and spiritual adultery to the Lord, Judah was also guilty of failure to listen to the prophets who had been sent by God (5:21; 7:25; cf. Dt 18:14–22).
3. Chapter 7 shows why the people had refused to listen to God's true prophets. They had presumed upon the covenant, failing to recognize that the covenant required them to walk in God's ways and do His will (v. 23). At the same time, God did not bring them out of Egypt to give them sacrifices and offerings (vv. 21–22).
4. Yet, the people were "uncircumcised in heart" (9:26) in need of God to act on their behalf. In other words, they needed the New Covenant (see Jer 31).
5. Moreover, the people were guilty of worshiping worthless imitations of Yahweh, who alone had created the heavens and earth (10:1–16).
6. As a result, exile was sure (10:17–25) because of their infidelity and idolatry (ch. 11).
7. Despite the fact that Jeremiah like Moses continued to plead for his people (14:13–22), not even Moses and Samuel could change God's mind (15:1).

8. Two pictures stand out in the next few chapters: the potter and the two baskets of figs.
9. The potter showed that God would refashion the ruined pot if the people would but repent (18:1–12).
10. One basket of figs represented those who would be taken to Babylon yet who would return to the land; the other basket represented those who remained in the land who would perish outside the land (ch. 24).
11. Chapter 25, which is an earlier oracle, begins to shift the focus from imminent exile to the return from Babylon after seventy years (25:11).

Prophecies of Salvation (Jer 26–35)

1. During the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was spared an attempted threat on his life.
2. In chapter 27, Jeremiah’s message was intensified. He warned that judgment was imminent, but he also told them to submit willingly to Babylon, who was bringing punishment from the Lord.
3. The death of Hananiah the prophet (28:17) was sure sign that his words of comfort were false and that Jeremiah’s words were true.
4. The exiles in Babylon were not to expect a quick return; they should expect 70 years (29:10).
5. Jeremiah 30–31 is sometimes referred to as the “Book of Comfort.”
6. Jeremiah 30 prophesies a time of peace when Israel and Judah would return to the land where a descendant of David would rule over an eternal kingdom (v. 9). Note the context of “the latter days” (v. 24).
7. Jeremiah 31 foresees the future blessing of the people as well as the establishment of the New Covenant, which includes internal torah, forgiveness of sin, and knowledge of Yahweh in all Israel (vv. 31–34).
8. Such covenant would be an “everlasting covenant” (32:40) and would include future royalty (33:15, 17) and future priesthood (33:18). Moreover, the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are transferred to David (33:19–22).
9. In contrast to the continued disobedience of the people (34:1–22), the Recabites stand as an example of those who were faithful to the covenant (35:1–19). As such, they were an example of what God was pleased with in His people. They received the blessing that should have gone to the sons of Israel.

Baruch’s Narrative about Jeremiah (Jer 36–45)

1. Jeremiah 36: After the Lord commands Jeremiah to record all of his previous prophecies, Baruch writes them down upon a scroll, takes the scroll to the temple, reads it to the officials, and allows them to take it and read it before King Jehoiakim. The king burns the scroll, so Jeremiah dictated his message to Baruch along with “many similar words” (v. 32b).
2. Jeremiah 37–38: During the reign of Zedekiah, Jeremiah is imprisoned for his message of judgment and remains in the court of the guardhouse until the destruction of Jerusalem.

3. Jeremiah 39: Although Jerusalem was destroyed and the nation carried into exile, Jeremiah and those who had sided with him were spared by Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, Jeremiah's words were fulfilled, and he and other faithful ones were spared.
4. Jeremiah 40–42: After the assassination of Gedaliah, Jewish survivors joined Jeremiah in order to serve Yahweh and obey His word. They intended to flee to Egypt, but the Lord warned that such a move would result in divine judgment like Jerusalem had received.
5. Jeremiah 43–44: Ignoring the word of Jeremiah, the men of Judah fled to Egypt, even forcing Jeremiah to go. Jeremiah prophesied that, as a result, Egypt would be destroyed because of those who had fled there. Of course, the people did not listen.
6. Jeremiah 45: Only Baruch and a small remnant (44:28) would survive the wrath of God.

Prophecies against the Nations (Jer 46–51)

1. As is typical in prophetic books, judgment against the nations means the certain salvation for Israel (49:2b; 50:4–8, 17–20, 33–34; 51:5–6, 10, 24, 35–39, 45–53).
2. At the same time, however, words of hope for the nations are interspersed with the words of judgment (48:47; 49:6, 39).

Narrative Conclusion (Jer 52)

1. This narrative, which is taken almost verbatim from 2 Kings 24–25, shows the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies. Judah was taken into exile.
2. The final verses of the book (52:31–34) complete the story with words of hope and expectancy. God was faithful to His promises to David despite the fact that they remained in exile.

The Purposes of Jeremiah

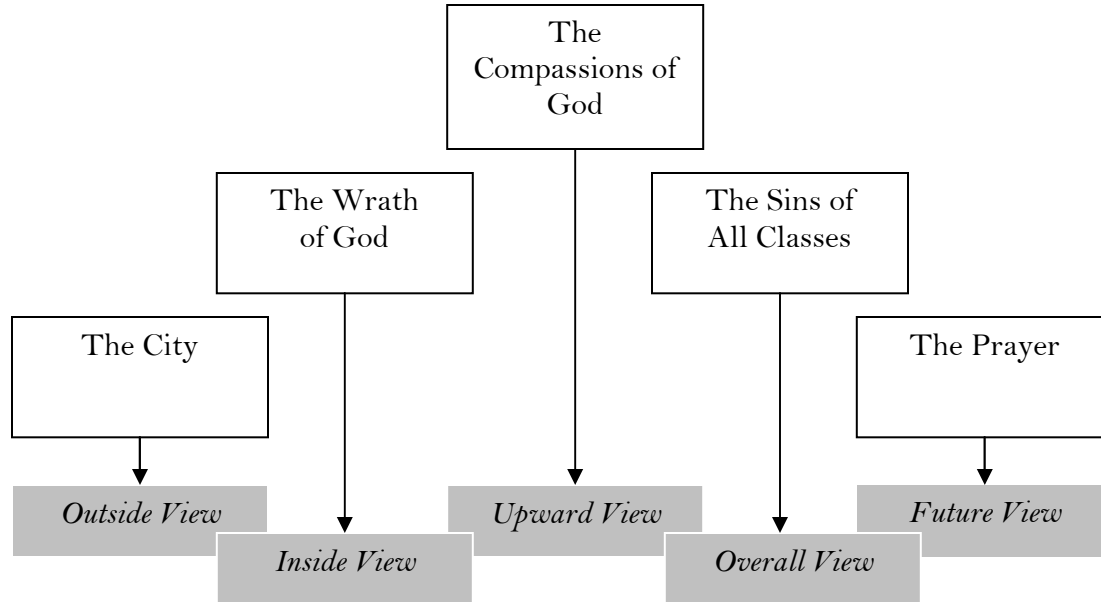
1. To confirm that Judah's exile and Jerusalem's destruction was a consequence of the nation's spiritual adultery.
2. To show the need for the New Covenant.

The Structure of Lamentations

| Acrostic Structure of Lamentations ¹ | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Poem 1 | Poem 2 | Poem 3 | Poem 4 |
| 22 3-line | 22 3-line | 66 3-line | 22 2-line |
| verses | verses | verses | verses |
| a | a | a | a |
| | | a | |
| | | a | b |
| b | b | b | |
| | | b | c |
| | | b | |

¹ Adapted from Hill & Walton, 436.

CLIMAX



The Purposes of Lamentations

1. To explain theologically the Exile and destruction of Jerusalem.
2. To instill hope in promised restoration.

How should I respond?

1. .