

# Bible Survey - Jeremiah

by Peter Hammond

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*Peter Hammond's sermon on Jeremiah emphasizes the themes of sin, judgment, and the hope of restoration through repentance and the New Covenant.*

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 1:5, Jeremiah 4:14, Jeremiah 9:2, Jeremiah 9:23, Jeremiah 23:5, Jeremiah 23:29, Jeremiah 29:11, Jeremiah 31:31, Jeremiah 32:38

**Topics:** "Repentance And Restoration", "Idolatry And Sin"

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## Description

Peter Hammond delivers a powerful sermon based on the message of Jeremiah, emphasizing the consequences of backsliding and the importance of repentance for restoration. The sermon highlights God's punishment for sin, the hardening of hearts through continual sin, and the danger of using religious activities as a cover for sin. It also warns against idolatry, child sacrifice, and the deceitful nature of the human heart, while pointing to God's faithfulness, patience, and the hope of a New Covenant.

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## Transcript

"Before I formed you in the womb; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1:5

The Message of Jeremiah

Backsliding leads to bondage. Repentance leads to restoration.

God will surely punish sin, in His way, and in His time.

Continual sin will harden your heart.

Religious activities can be used as a cover for sin.

Refusing God's discipline is rebellion.

God's patience can be exhausted by persistent sin.

If we focus on feelings and circumstances, we will grow weary.

God is faithful. Never compromise.

God is Patient. But his patience has a limit.

"O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?" Jeremiah 4:14

#### Unfaithful Judah

The people of Judah have abandoned God. The Covenant is being ignored. Idols are being worshipped. Children are being sacrificed. Judah is immoral and idolatrous. Judah is described as an unfaithful wife, adulterous and defiled. Unless she Repents, God will judge her harlotry.

"For they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men... They have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth... for they proceed from evil to evil and they do not know Me, says the Lord." Jeremiah 9:2-3

#### Empty Ritual

Jeremiah warns that the religious activities of Judah are futile because they do not fear God and obey His Commandments (Jeremiah 2:19). "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me." Jeremiah 9:23-24

#### Idolatry

"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles... for the customs of the peoples are futile..." (Jeremiah 10:2-3). The idols are exposed as futile and powerless: "they cannot speak; they must be carried... they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them... a wooden idol is a worthless doctrine..." (Jeremiah 10:5-8). People who worship idols are described as: "dull-hearted and foolish... without knowledge..." Jeremiah 10:8,14

#### Child Sacrifice

"And they have built the high places... to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire..."

Jeremiah 7:31

#### Foreign Threats

Jeremiah warns Judah against the danger of trusting in alliances with Egypt and Assyria. He warns of the threat of the rising power of Babylon, which is destined to overthrow the Assyrians, defeat Egypt and destroy Jerusalem.

#### False Shepherds

The religious leaders of Judah are condemned as "dull-hearted" (10:21). "For both prophet and priest are profane; yes, in My House, I have found their wickedness... slippery ways... darkness... folly... they cause My people Israel to err. Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem; they commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evil-doers so that no one turns back from their wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to me, her inhabitants like Gomorrah... profaneness has gone out into all the land... they make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They continually say to those who despise Me: 'the Lord has said you shall have peace'; and to

everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say: 'No evil shall come upon you'. For who has stood in the council of the Lord, and who have perceived and heard His Word? But if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My Words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings" Jeremiah 23:11-22

"Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood." Jeremiah 48:10

### The Bitter Fruit of False Prophecies

Those who had so confidently asserted that Judah was safe because they were "God's people", and that Jerusalem could never be conquered because God would protect her, were exposed as worthless false prophets. God's Covenant was always conditional and Lamentations records in history what God had warned at the giving of the Law: "If you do not carefully observe all the Words of this Law that are written in this Book, that you may fear His glorious and awesome Name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues - great and prolonged plagues - and serious and prolonged sicknesses... to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other... And among those nations you shall find no rest... Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life." Deuteronomy 28:58-68

"For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Jeremiah 4:22

"...they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return... They are foolish; for they do not know the way of the Lord, the judgment of their God." Jeremiah 5:3-4

"They have lied about the Lord, and said: 'It is not He. Neither will evil come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine'." Jeremiah 5:12

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so..." Jeremiah 5:31

"...Behold, the Word of the Lord is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord." Jeremiah 6:10-11

"Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people - the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My Words, nor My Law, but rejected it." Jeremiah 6:19

"Even the stork in the Heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the Judgment of the Lord." Jeremiah 8:7

"How long will the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, for the wickedness of those who dwell there..." Jeremiah 12:4

### The Deceitful Heart

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

## Jeremiah 17:8-10

### Visual Illustrations

To dramatize the message entrusted to him by God, the prophet Jeremiah often used symbolic visual illustrations. Jeremiah smashed a clay jar in front of the leaders of Jerusalem to dramatize how Jerusalem and the Temple were going to be smashed (19:1-15). Jeremiah remained celibate, having been instructed by God not to marry as a sign of the loneliness that would come upon the apostate people of Judah when they were exiled from the land (16:1-13). Jeremiah walked with a yolk around his neck to dramatize that the stiff-necked people of Judah were going to come under foreign oppression (27:1-13). When the Babylonians were already invading the land, Jeremiah bought a field. While this seemed to be a waste of money, it was a prophetic act to indicate that the land would, 70 years later, come back under the control of God's people (32-33).

"Is not My Word like a fire?' says the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'" Jeremiah 23:29

### The Persecuted Prophet

Jeremiah suffered for his stand as the religious and civil authorities of Judah did not want to hear his condemnations of their immorality and idolatry. Jeremiah was mocked, threatened, thrown into prison and thrown down a well. He narrowly escaped death. Another faithful prophet, Uriah, was killed (26:20-24).

### A Message of Hope

Although Judah would fall and the Temple would be destroyed, Jeremiah pointed towards a future restoration. After 70 year of exile in Babylon, a remnant would return, rebuild the Temple and restore Jerusalem.

"Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; then the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you." Jeremiah 26:13

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

## Jeremiah 29:11-13

### A New Covenant

Jeremiah prophesied of a New Covenant, not involving slaughtered animals and exterior laws, but involving the transformation of hearts and minds. "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah... I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God; and they shall be My people... and they shall all know Me... I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34

"They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me." Jeremiah 32:38-40

## Jesus in Jeremiah

"Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of Righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His Name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (YHWH Tsidkenu)." Jeremiah 23:5-6

## Babylon

Babylon was the greatest empire and its capital city the greatest city in the world, the historian Herodotus recorded that the city consisted of 196 square miles of the most beautiful architecture, hanging gardens, palaces and temples. The walls were 15 miles long and 200 feet high. The towers were 300 feet high. The walls were 187 feet thick at the base. Every authority at the time would agree that the city of Babylon was impregnable. Yet the Word of God came that: "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken ...it shall be desolate forever." Jeremiah 51:58-62

Now, the Great Wall of China is not nearly as thick, nor as strong, as the walls of Babylon were, and although it is older it still stands today. The walls of Jerusalem still stand. But today there is no doubt that the walls of Babylon have been destroyed.

Determined to make this the capital of his worldwide empire, Alexander the Great decided that he would rebuild Babylon. Alexander issued 600,000 rations to his soldiers and ordered the rebuilding of the city of Babylon. Yet, Alexander died suddenly at the age of 32 and his enterprise of rebuilding Babylon was abandoned.

In the 4th Century AD, Julian the Apostate, who attempted to restore paganism to Rome, was engaged in a war with the Persians. To prevent the Persians re-establishing the defences of Babylon, Julian ordered the remnants of the wall of Babylon completely broken down. In this surprising way, one of Scriptures greatest antagonists of all time became the agent to fulfilling one of the clearest and most repeated prophecies in the Old Testament.

"Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate ...it shall be no more inhabited forever." Jeremiah 50:13,39

Today the ruins of Babylon are a wilderness inhabited only by scorpions and snakes. Although the fertility of the lands around Babylon were legendary, today it is a barren desert.

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