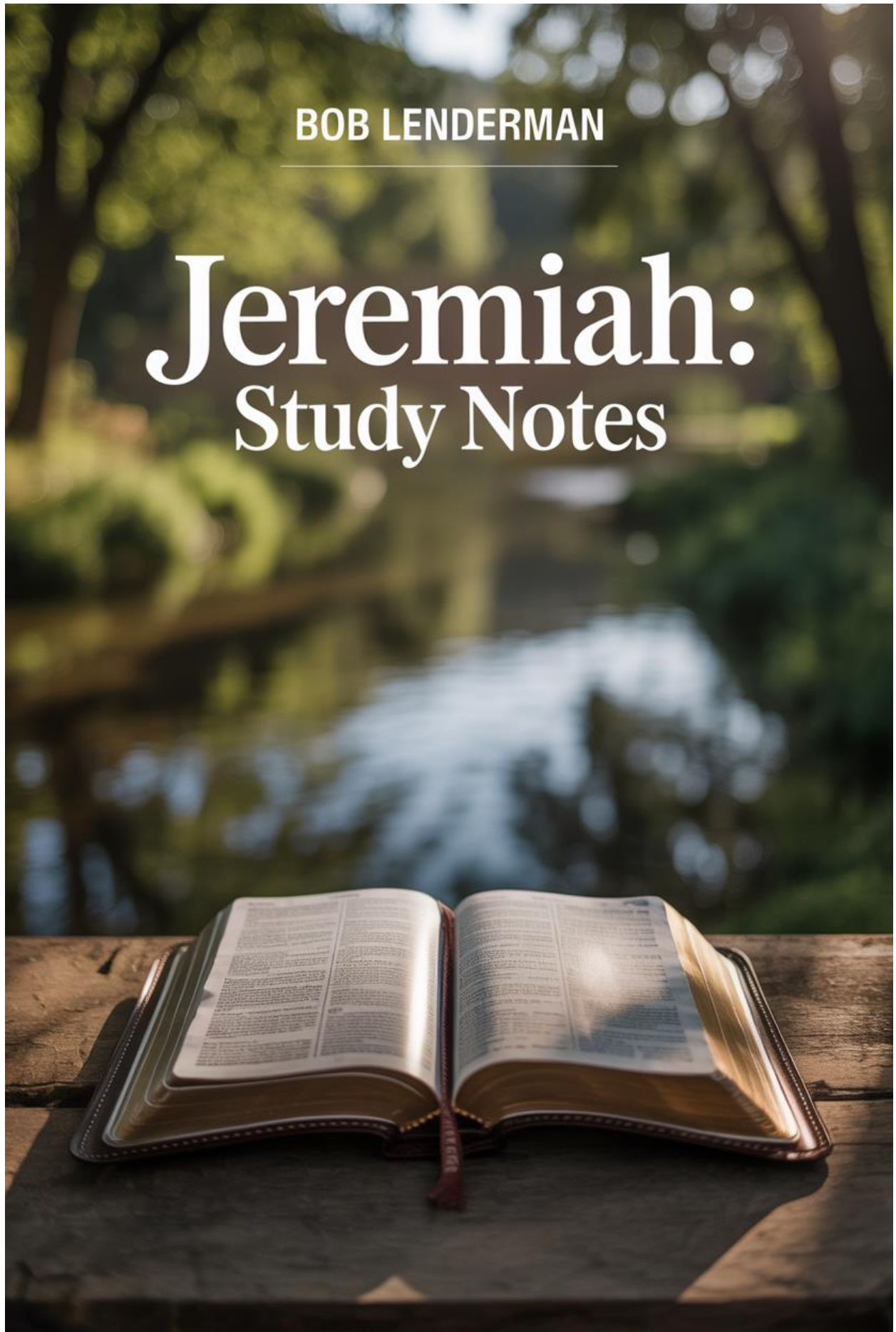


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Jeremiah: Study Notes



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JEREMIAH: STUDY NOTES

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The Book of Jeremiah: Study Notes

I. Introduction & Context

Q1: What is the Book of Jeremiah?

- **A:** The Book of Jeremiah is a prophetic book in the Old Testament of the Bible. It contains the messages and experiences of the prophet Jeremiah, who was called by God to speak to the people of Judah during a time of immense turmoil.

Q2: Who was Jeremiah and when did he live?

- **A:** Jeremiah was a priest from Anathoth, a village near Jerusalem. He prophesied primarily during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah, from Josiah (around 640-609 BC) through Zedekiah (597-586 BC). This was a period leading up to and including the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. (Reference: Jeremiah 1:1-3)

Q3: What was the historical situation in Judah during Jeremiah's ministry?

- **A:** Judah was a kingdom facing significant threats from powerful empires, primarily Babylon. Internally, the people and their leaders had largely turned away from God, embracing idolatry, injustice, and false security. There were also political struggles, including attempts to form alliances with Egypt against Babylon, which Jeremiah strongly advised against.

Q4: What was God's main message through Jeremiah?

- **A:** God's central message was a call to **repentance**. Jeremiah warned that because of Judah's persistent sin and unfaithfulness, God would bring judgment through the Babylonians. However, he also proclaimed God's ultimate plan for **restoration** and a **new covenant**.

Q5: What are some key themes in the Book of Jeremiah?

- **A:**
 - **Judgment and Wrath:** For Judah's sin.
 - **Repentance and Return to God:** The necessary response to God's warnings.
 - **God's Sovereignty:** God is in control of nations and history.
 - **The New Covenant:** A promise of God's law written on the heart and forgiveness of sins.
 - **Hope and Restoration:** God's ultimate faithfulness and future plans for His people.
 - **The Suffering Servant Prophet:** Jeremiah's personal anguish as he delivered difficult messages.
 - **False Prophets vs. True Prophets:** Jeremiah often contrasted his message with those who spoke smooth lies.

II. Jeremiah's Call and Early Ministry

Q6: How did Jeremiah become a prophet?

- **A:** God called Jeremiah when he was young, before he was even formed in his mother's womb. God told him He had consecrated him to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah felt inadequate and protested, saying he was too young, but God assured him He would be with Jeremiah and put His words in his mouth. (Reference: Jeremiah 1:4-10)

Q7: What were some of the symbolic actions God instructed Jeremiah to perform early on?

- **A:**
 - **The Linen Belt:** Jeremiah was told to buy a linen belt, wear it until it was ruined, and then hide it by a river. This symbolized how Judah and Jerusalem would become ruined and useless because of their sin. (Reference: Jeremiah 13:1-11)
 - **The Potter and the Clay:** Jeremiah went to the potter's house and watched the potter rework a damaged pot. God used this to show that He could also reshape and restore Judah, but if they refused to repent, He would shatter them. (Reference: Jeremiah 18:1-10)

Q8: What was the general reaction to Jeremiah's message?

- **A:** Jeremiah faced intense opposition, ridicule, and persecution. People hated his message because it was a message of doom. They accused him, tried to silence him, imprisoned him, and plotted against his life. (Reference: Jeremiah 11:18-23, 20:1-2, 10)
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III. Messages of Judgment

Q9: What were the specific sins God held Judah accountable for?

- **A:**
 - **Idolatry:** Worshiping foreign gods and idols in high places and even in the Temple itself. (Reference: Jeremiah 2:8, 23, 7:30)
 - **Injustice and Oppression:** Exploiting the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. (Reference: Jeremiah 5:26-28, 7:5-6)
 - **Unfaithfulness and Adultery:** Spiritually committing adultery against God, like an unfaithful spouse. (Reference: Jeremiah 3:8-9)
 - **False Security:** Relying on outward religious practices, the Temple, or political alliances instead of on God. (Reference: Jeremiah 7:4, 8-11)
 - **Rejection of God's Word:** Ignoring the warnings of God's prophets. (Reference: Jeremiah 6:10-11)

Q10: What was the primary instrument of God's judgment?

- **A:** The **Babylonian Empire**, led by Nebuchadnezzar, was identified as the tool God would use to punish Judah. (Reference: Jeremiah 21:4-7, 25:9)

Q11: What was the "Book of Warnings"?

- **A:** Jeremiah was commanded by God to write down all the words of judgment against Israel and Judah. This scroll was then to be read in the Temple. Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, read it, and when King Jehoiakim heard it, he cut it up with a knife and burned it in the fire, showing his defiance. God then told Jeremiah to write a new scroll, including harsher judgments because of this act. (Reference: Jeremiah 36)

IV. Messages of Hope and the New Covenant

Q12: Did Jeremiah only deliver messages of doom?

- **A:** No. While judgment was a significant part of his message, Jeremiah also proclaimed God's enduring love and His ultimate plans for **hope** and **restoration**.

Q13: What is the "New Covenant" that Jeremiah prophesied?

- **A:** God promised that in the future, He would make a **new covenant** with His people, different from the one He made at Sinai.
 - **Key Features:**
 - God would put His law *within* them and write it on their hearts. (Reference: Jeremiah 31:33)

- He would forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. (Reference: Jeremiah 31:34)
- All His people would know Him, from the least to the greatest. (Reference: Jeremiah 31:34)
- **Significance:** This prophecy points forward to the work of Jesus Christ, who established the New Covenant through His sacrifice.

Q14: What does Jeremiah say about the future of Israel?

- **A:** Despite the impending exile and destruction, Jeremiah spoke of a future return from captivity and a renewed relationship with God. He prophesied about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, ultimately fulfilled in Christ. (Reference: Jeremiah 23:3-6, 30:10-11)

Q15: What does the passage about the "Righteous Branch" signify?

- **A:** God promised to raise up a "Righteous Branch" (or "Branch of David") for Judah. This Messiah figure would reign wisely and justly, bringing security and righteousness to the land. This also points to Jesus Christ. (Reference: Jeremiah 23:5-6)

V. Jeremiah's Suffering and Character

Q16: How did Jeremiah personally experience the pain of his message?

- **A:** Jeremiah is often called the "weeping prophet." He deeply mourned the sin of his people and the judgment that was coming. He experienced intense personal suffering, loneliness, and rejection because of his obedience to God. (Reference: Jeremiah 9:1, 20:7-18)

Q17: What is Jeremiah's "Lament" or "Confession" in Jeremiah Chapter 20?

- **A:** In this passage, Jeremiah expresses his deep anguish to God, feeling deceived and overwhelmed by the prophetic call. He questions why he was ever born, but ultimately reaffirms his trust in God's power and presence. (Reference: Jeremiah 20:7-13)

Q18: What happened to Jeremiah after Jerusalem fell?

- **A:** After the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, Jeremiah was initially held in Jerusalem. He remained in the land with the poorer class of people left behind. However, a remnant, including soldiers and their leaders, forced Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them to Egypt, fearing retribution from the Babylonians. Jeremiah continued to prophesy even in Egypt. (Reference: Jeremiah 39:15-18, 43:1-7)

VI. Structure of the Book

Q19: How is the Book of Jeremiah generally organized?

- **A:** While not strictly chronological, the book can be broadly categorized:

- **Jeremiah's Call and Early Prophecies (Chapters 1-25):** Introduction, call, early messages of judgment against Judah and other nations.
- **Prophecies of Judgment and Accusations (Chapters 26-45):** More specific prophecies, Jeremiah's conflicts, the destruction of the Temple, and his personal experiences.
- **Prophecies Against the Nations (Chapters 46-51):** Oracles against Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Elam, and Babylon.
- **Historical Appendix (Chapter 52):** A factual account of Jerusalem's fall, mirroring parts of 2 Kings 24-25.

Q20: What is the significance of the prophecies against the nations?

- **A:** These oracles demonstrate God's sovereignty not only over Judah but over all the nations. They show that God judges all sin and injustice, and they highlight the ultimate downfall of empires that oppose Him. They also reinforce the idea that Babylon, despite its power, would eventually face divine judgment.