

DISCOVERY



Call of the Prophet and First Pronouncements of Judgments

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Jeremiah 1:1 through 15:21

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” (Jeremiah 1:9-10)

BACKGROUND

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest who lived in Anathoth, which was a city of priests located three miles northeast of Jerusalem. At the time of his birth, Judah was ruled by its most wicked king, Manasseh. When Manasseh died, his son Amon continued his idolatrous practices. Thus, Jeremiah grew to adulthood at a time when idolatry flourished in the land.

In 640 B.C., Amon’s own servants assassinated him. Josiah, Amon’s son, became king and through godly counsel sought the Lord, purged the land of idolatry, repaired the Temple, and called his nation to repentance. Josiah led the nation into revival. It was during the thirteenth year of Josiah’s good reign that Jeremiah was called to be a prophet.

Jeremiah’s ministry as a prophet included the time between the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of Babylon. Judah’s geographical position placed the country in the middle of traffic between the three great powers of that time: Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. The hostilities between these nations were used to magnify God’s call to repentance and bring judgment on Judah for her sins.

The Book of Jeremiah opens with his call from God to be a prophet, and a prophecy of destruction that would come on the nation of Judah from the north (Babylon). The first chapter closes with God’s promise to be with Jeremiah and to deliver him.

Chapter 2 begins a series of discourses directed to Judah. Chapters 2 through 8 are an appraisal of Judah’s apostasy, depravity, and rebellion, combined with prophecies of judgment—destruction and desolation for the people and land because of their failure to repent and return to serving God.

Chapters 9 through 15 begin with Jeremiah deeply sorrowing in vain for a people who had totally abandoned themselves to everything vile. God lamented for His chosen people who had utterly rejected their inheritance by breaking their covenant with God.

The Lord often commanded Jeremiah to use objects as symbols to graphically illustrate His message to the people. In chapter 13, the prophet was instructed to wear a linen girdle (like those worn by the priests to secure their outer clothing). Later, he was told to hide the girdle in a hole. When God told Jeremiah to retrieve it, it was marred and “profitable for nothing.” God used this to demonstrate how good it was when Judah walked with Him. However, when the people turned to other gods, they became defiled and worse than the marred girdle.

All the pleadings of the Lord and intercession for the people by Jeremiah did not cause Judah to cry out to God for mercy. Chapter 15 ends with another promise from God that if they would return to Him, He would deliver them from their enemies.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Jeremiah respond to God calling him to be a prophet, and why? Jeremiah 1:4-6

2. Seven verses in the first two chapters of the Book of Jeremiah contain the phrase “the word of the LORD.” What is the significance of this statement in these Scriptures?

3. What two “evils” had the people of Judah committed, as recorded in Jeremiah 2:13? In your own words, explain the examples used in this verse.

4. Why did God consider Judah’s sin to be greater than the sin of Israel? Jeremiah 3:6-8

5. During Jeremiah’s ministry, other prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests ruled over the people by following the directions of these false prophets. According to Jeremiah 5:31, why did the people tolerate this?

6. During Josiah’s reign, God told the people of Judah, through the Prophet Jeremiah, that He would allow them to continue to inhabit their country if they would “amend” their ways and their “doings.” (See Jeremiah 7:1-3.) Define the word *amend*. What is meant by “amend your ways and your doings?”

7. Jeremiah 9:23-24 indicates that the Jewish people trusted in their own wisdom, might, and riches. In our day, too, people tend to trust in human wisdom, power, and wealth. If we are sincerely trusting God, how will that trust be evidenced in our lives?

8. Why did God lament over forsaking His house and His heritage? Jeremiah 12:7-13

9. The prophet lived through an evil and difficult time in his country’s history, and in Jeremiah 15:10, he cried out in bitter anguish of soul, feeling himself pitted against the whole world. What promise was given to him in Jeremiah 15:11? What promises give us encouragement as we face difficulties in our lives?

CONCLUSION

Jeremiah was given the enormous task of calling an idolatrous nation back to God, knowing the people would not respond favorably. He witnessed firsthand God’s longsuffering and love for His people as He pled with them to repent. We can draw comfort in knowing that we, like Jeremiah, serve a loving and merciful God.

NOTES
