

Jeremiah

*This is part of an ongoing series of short articles designed to help us understand what scripture is and what is **in** each book of scripture. Previous articles can be found at www.openarms-communityofchrist.org.*

Jeremiah was a priest who lived in Judah around 625-487 BCE. This collection of his writings is often called one of the most depressing books in the Bible!

Much of the book is not in chronological order. Instead, it is a collection of oracles or messages from various times of Jeremiah's ministry. Some were against Judah and Jerusalem while others were against the foreign nations that constantly created challenges for Judah.

However, the final few chapters, dealing with the last months of Jeremiah's life, do appear to be in chronological order, providing us with a wealth of detail about the challenges he underwent personally. These include a judicial hearing when he preached in the temple as well as opposition toward him at the end of his life in Egypt.

This book is unique in that it contains a significant record of Jeremiah's spiritual struggle with God. He felt that he was doing God's work, but at times he also felt abandoned by God because the people did not listen to him. He challenged them in a series of laments, criticizing Judah for worshiping other gods and calling them to repent and return to God.

Jeremiah was very concerned with rewards and punishment. When the people obeyed God, they would be rewarded; when they didn't, they would face punishments. God's people would be judged, and the judgment would not necessarily be pleasant, but the unhappy present time would eventually be replaced with a new and more enduring relationship with God.

Jeremiah has given his name to a noun (jeremiah) that describes a long work in which an author laments the state of society and its morals, almost always containing a prophecy about imminent downfall. While the book that is called by his name **does** lament the situation he saw in Judah, there are also intimations of hope for the country...if they will return to the God who loves them.