



## Part 1 of 5

God sent the prophet Jeremiah to declare the Word of God to Judah's kings and common people alike to repent during the 40 most turbulent years (627 – 586 BC) of Judah's long history (southern Jewish nation). Jeremiah lives and prophesies in Jerusalem during these tragic years leading up to the capture and terrible destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

Like Moses, Jeremiah felt inadequate for the job. He believed his youth would hamper his ability to deliver God's message of gloom to a hostile audience. God responds in a vision and says He created Jeremiah for this job (1:5-8). It is interesting to note the Hebrew word that describes Jeremiah is often used for a "young teenager," so Jeremiah may have been as young as 13 years old. (Additionally, it is worth noting Jeremiah is not alone, he is contemporary with the prophets Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, and the early years of Daniel).

The northern Jewish nation of Israel had already been destroyed about 100 years earlier by the Assyrian Empire, 722 BC. Judah, with its capital and Temple in Jerusalem, had become more enamored with foreign idols and had become less and less faithful to God. Not only was idolatry rampant, society was also unravelling morally due to their disregard for God's call to care for others and to be concerned with justice for all members of society. Jeremiah declares that Judah's religious rituals will not cover their unethical behavior and make it right with God.

But Jeremiah, like God's other prophets, also offers hope for Israel's rebirth and restoration after the judgment. In fact, not only will there be restoration, at the center of this message, there is also description of the coming "messianic new covenant" (chpts 30-33).

Note, much of the book of Jeremiah does not follow a chronological sequence; the book's structure is more thematic. *More next week...*