

## **The Half Hour That Changes the World**

### **Jeremiah**

### **Book 24**

#### **Basic Question behind the book:**

*Will we keep going when everything and everyone seems to be against us and don't acknowledge that God is at work in and through us?*

#### **Summary of book:**

The book of Jeremiah is a beautiful combination of history, poetry, and biography. Jeremiah, like the other prophets, not only heard from God but also sought to carefully craft how to convey his message to others in such a way as to achieve maximum impact. He often uses symbolism to communicate his message. He speaks into such themes as sin, punishment, the over-riding Lordship of God, the need for new hearts, and the importance of faithful service. It is a long book (the longest in the Bible in fact) with a general structure as follows:

##### **GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH (1:1- 45:5)**

1. The call of Jeremiah (chapter 1)
2. Jeremiah condemns Judah for her sins (chapter 2:1- 10:25)
3. Jeremiah prophesies destruction (chapter 11:1 - 20:18)
4. Jeremiah accuses Judah's leaders (chapter 21:1 - 29:32)
5. Restoration is promised (chapter 30:1 - 33:26)
6. God's promised judgement arrives (chapters 34:1- 45:5)

##### **GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (46:1 - 52:34)**

1. Prophecies about foreign nations (chapter 46:1- 51:64)
2. The fall of Jerusalem (chapter 52)

#### **Vital Statistics:**

Purpose: To urge people to turn from their sins and back to God.

Recipients: It was written to Judah (the southern kingdom) and to the people in the capital Jerusalem particularly.

Author: The prophet Jeremiah.

Dating: Jeremiah's ministry dates from approximately 627 BC to 586 BC although, as with other books in this period, it was probably written down at least a generation later.

Setting: Jeremiah ministered under Judah's last five kings – Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. You can read the history of this period in 2 Kings 22 - 25 & 2 Chronicles 34 – 36. Jeremiah's ministry occurred about the same time as Habakkuk. Zephaniah was ministering just before him & Ezekiel came along near the end of Jeremiah's time, just before and after the exile in Babylon had begun.

#### **Other Reflections:**

By all normal standards of success, Jeremiah would be considered a failure. He spends nearly forty years of his life trying to share a message that barely anyone wanted to hear or acknowledged to be from God. If he had been a Methodist minister, he would have been moved to another appointment after five years. It then begs the question do we base our success in ministry on outward results? Is it only a good sermon if everyone says they liked it afterwards? Or is it a good sermon because we felt we were faithful to deliver what God had given us? Is it a good mission project if we can see people joining the church? Or is it a success because we served God in the way that we felt led to do, in the way we felt led to do it? Just what is success?

*"Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realise how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me" declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty (2:19)*

*"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (31:33)*