Synopsis of Jeremiah

“The theme of this prophet consists largely in a stern warning to Judah to turn from idolatry and sin to avoid the catastrophe of exile. Every class of Hebrew society was condemned as inexcusably guilty. As long as Judah refused to repent, the Babylonian Captivity was inevitable. The Hebrew nation should submit to the Chaldean yoke, rather than to rebel against it, since it was a just chastisement for their unfaithfulness to God’s covenant. Nevertheless, the day would come when Israel would be delivered by the Messiah, the righteous Branch; therefore true Israel should always trust in God alone, never in the arm of flesh.” – A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Pg. 399

“In the face of this Babylonian threat, Jeremiah was charged with the message that Babylon was the instrument of God’s wrath, sent to punish the wicked nation of Judah. The only remedy, Jeremiah announced, was the accept God’s punishment by submitting to the yoke of Babylon.” – NIV Compact Bible Commentary, Pg. 375

“God is still on the throne and history is His story. The German writer Friedrich von Logau said it better: ‘Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.’ God judges the nations and eventually pays them the wages earned from their sin. No nation can despise God’s law and defy His rule without suffering for it. The prophecy of Jeremiah teaches that very clearly… Though at first he hesitated when God called him, Jeremiah surrendered to the Lord and became one of history’s most decisive spiritual leaders. Tragically, however, the people who most needed his leadership rejected him and turned their backs on the Word of God.” – Be Decisive, Prelude

Jeremiah 1-29

In Old Testament Theology (pg. 301), Paul House breaks down Jeremiah 1-29 into the following sections. These sections will be followed throughout the survey of the book.

- Jeremiah’s Call – Chapter 1
- God Instructs Jeremiah – Chapters 2-6
- Jeremiah Proclaims That God Rejects Hollow Worship – Chapters 7-10
- A Prophets Struggle With God Allowing The Faithful To Suffer – Chapters 11-20
- God Vindicates True Prophets And Comforts Sufferers – Chapters 21-29

The reader of Jeremiah should note that the book is not easily outlined since it does not follow a strict chronological order. Jeremiah’s ministry spans the length of multiple kings, and the presentation of his prophecies follows more of a thematic approach.
i. **Timing, Call, & Purpose – Jeremiah 1 (ESV)** — 1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. 4 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” 6 Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” 7 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.” 9 Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.” 11 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see an almond branch.” 12 Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.” 13 The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” 14 Then the Lord said to me, “Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. 16 And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. 17 But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. 18 And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.”

II. **God Instructs Jeremiah – Chapters 2-6**

Many commentators point out that Chapter 2-6 are similar in purpose to Isaiah 1-5. The chapters are used to state the case for the impending fulfillment of God’s prophecies of judgment and future restoration of God’s people.
a. Key Verses
   i. **Summarizing the problem with God’s people — Jeremiah 2:11–13 (ESV)** —  
      11 Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. 12 Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, 13 for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

   ii. **Judah worse than Israel — Jeremiah 3:6–11 (ESV)** — 6 The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? 7 And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. 9 Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. 10 Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the Lord.” 11 And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.

   iii. **Warning of the enemy from the north, Babylon — Jeremiah 4:5–7 (ESV)** — 5 Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say, “Blow the trumpet through the land; cry aloud and say, ‘Assemble, and let us go into the fortified cities!’ 6 Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not, for I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction. 7 A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone out from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant.

   “Jeremiah had a difficult message to give. He had to tell God’s own people that God was taking their opponent’s side in judgment! He had to tell them that their large, powerful, pagan attacker would win, so they had better give up.” — *The Message of the Old Testament, Location 12264*

   iv. **God says Judah’s sins are too great to avoid discipline — Jeremiah 5:6–9 (ESV)** — 6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall strike them down; a wolf from the desert shall devastate them. A leopard is watching their cities; everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are great. 7 “How can I pardon you? Your children have forsaken me and have sworn by those who are no...
Old Testament II: Prophets & Poetry
Jeremiah 1-29

III. Jeremiah Proclaims That God Rejects Hollow Worship – Chapters 7-10
a. Key Verses
i. Don’t fool yourself that protection is yours because you have the Temple – Jeremiah 7:1–4, 11-12 (ESV) — 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord. 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’ ... 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. 12 Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.

ii. External circumcision is not a sign of righteousness before God – Jeremiah 9:23–26 (ESV) — 23 Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.” 25 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh— 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.”

1. Moses had centuries earlier pronounced the blessings and curses that come from obedience or disobedience. Moses tells the Israelites that they will forsake God and God will bring judgment upon them by driving them out of the land. However, Moses also gives God’s people the promise of a greater restoration that will come by the hand of God.

Deuteronomy 30:1–6 (ESV) — 1 “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your
God has driven you, 2 and return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. 5 And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

iii. The foolishness of idolatry – Jeremiah 10:1–5 (ESV) — 1 Hear the word that the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. 2 Thus says the Lord: “Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them, 3 for the customs of the peoples are vanity. A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. 4 They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move. 5 Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.”

Just as in Isaiah 44, Jeremiah highlights the ridiculousness of idol worship. Man is insane to think that something he creates can have dominion over him and should be an object of worship. Thinking this of an idol is to miss the imperfection of the creator of the idol and be blinded to the fact that this is nothing but a dead tree or some other temporal creation.

IV. A Prophets Struggle With God Allowing The Faithful To Suffer – Chapters 11-20

a. Key Verses

i. God’s protection of the unpopular prophet – Jeremiah 11:18–23 (ESV) — 18 The Lord made it known to me and I knew; then you showed me their deeds. 19 But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.” 20 But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. 21 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, “Do not prophesy in the
name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand”— 22 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, 23 and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.”

“Jeremiah stands on both sides of the issue, feeling the grief of the people that will surely come with the judgment (4:19-22), and also the anger of God because of their perversity (11:11-20).” — Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament, Location 2619

ii. Jeremiah wonders what is taking God so long to carry out punishment – Jeremiah 12:1-3 (ESV) — 1 Righteous are you, O Lord, when I complain to you; yet I would plead my case before you. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive? 2 You plant them, and they take root; they grow and produce fruit; you are near in their mouth and far from their heart. 3 But you, O Lord, know me; you see me, and test my heart toward you. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and set them apart for the day of slaughter.

iii. God answers Jeremiah by assuring the evil will get their due, but compassion is never far off – Jeremiah 12:14-17 (ESV) — 14 Thus says the Lord concerning all my evil neighbors who touch the heritage that I have given my people Israel to inherit: “Behold, I will pluck them up from their land, and I will pluck up the house of Judah from among them. 15 And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land. 16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, ‘As the Lord lives,’ even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people. 17 But if any nation will not listen, then I will utterly pluck it up and destroy it, declares the Lord.”

iv. God’s people had a purpose to bring glory to Him, but they didn’t fulfill their purpose – Jeremiah 13:1-11 (ESV) — 1 Thus says the Lord to me, “Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it around your waist, and do not dip it in water.” 2 So I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist. 3 And the word of the Lord came to me a second time, 4 “Take the loincloth that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft of the rock.” 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. 6 And after many days the Lord said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the loincloth that I commanded you to hide there.” 7 Then I went to the
Euphrates, and dug, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. And behold, the loincloth was spoiled; it was good for nothing. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 9 “Thus says the Lord: Even so will I spoil the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10 This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing. 11 For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen.

v. Jeremiah is instructed not to pray for God’s people – Jeremiah 14:11–12 (ESV) — 11 The Lord said to me: “Do not pray for the welfare of this people. 12 Though they fast, I will not hear their cry, and though they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.”

vi. No hope for Judah...discipline is inevitable – Jeremiah 15:1–4 (ESV) — 1 Then the Lord said to me, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! 2 And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “ ’Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.’ 3 I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the Lord: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 And I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

vii. While discipline is inevitable, so is restoration – Jeremiah 16:14–15 (ESV) — 14 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ 15 but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.

viii. God’s wants a people with a pure heart – Jeremiah 17:7–10 (ESV) — 7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in
the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

ix. Repentance is always an option and with it will come God’s blessings – Jeremiah 18:1-11 (ESV) — 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” 3 So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. 4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 6 “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. 7 If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8 and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. 9 And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, 10 and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. 11 Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’

x. Jeremiah faces persecution for his message – Jeremiah 20:1-4 (ESV) — 1 Now Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer, who was chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. 2 Then Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper Benjamin Gate of the house of the Lord. 3 The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The Lord does not call your name Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. 4 For thus says the Lord: Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They shall fall by the sword of their enemies while you look on. And I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He shall carry them captive to Babylon, and shall strike them down with the sword.

V. God Vindicates True Prophets And Comforts Sufferers – Chapters 21-29
a. Key Verses
i. God’s people will be restored through the coming Messiah – Jeremiah 23:1-6 (ESV) — 1 “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel,
concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the Lord. 3 Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. 4 I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord. 5 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’

ii. Two groups with two endings…one good and one bad – Jeremiah 24:1–3 (ESV) — 1 After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the officials of Judah, the craftsmen, and the metal workers, and had brought them to Babylon, the Lord showed me this vision: behold, two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the Lord. 2 One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten. 3 And the Lord said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I said, “Figs, the good figs very good, and the bad figs very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten.”

iii. Those taken to exile will be restored – Jeremiah 24:6 (ESV) — 6 I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

iv. Those that remain will be blotted out – Jeremiah 24:10 (ESV) — 10 And I will send sword, famine, and pestilence upon them, until they shall be utterly destroyed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.”

v. Babylon will reign for seventy years – Jeremiah 25:11–14 (ESV) — 11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste. 13 I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. 14 For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”
“The canonical importance of Jeremiah is evident not only from its length and its prominent position, but also from its influence on later books. Chronicles, Ezra, and Daniel cite Jeremiah’s "seventy years" in their respective assimilations of the idea of a purposeful "exile" followed by salvation.” – *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament, Location 2650*

vi. **God’s people should submit themselves to the Babylonians – Jeremiah 27:16–17 (ESV) — 16** Then I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, “Thus says the Lord: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, ‘Behold, the vessels of the Lord’s house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon,’ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you. 17 Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a desolation?

vii. **The exile will not be short, live rightly before the Babylonians, and restoration will come – Jeremiah 29:1–14 (ESV) — 1** These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. 3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: 4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord. 10 “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from
all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

**Works Cited**


## Appendix A

### Function of the Prophets

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<tr>
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<td>Mouthpiece-social/spiritual commentator</td>
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## Chronology of the Prophets

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<td>Nahum ca. 650</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERSIAN AGE</td>
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