

A. Kings

Jeremiah, like 1 and 2 Kings, presents a detailed description of the failures that led to the destruction of Jerusalem. See, for example, Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 24-25. Jeremiah has an even closer relationship to the book of Kings, for both books end with the elevation of Jehoiachin in captivity (2 Kings 25.27-30; Jer. 52.31-34). Jeremiah presents a perspective from the middle of the Babylonian captivity, like 1 and 2 Kings. The most optimistic way the authors of these books could end their books was to show that the anointed son of David, Jehoiachin, was still under the Davidic promise of God, even while he was in captivity.

B. Chronicles

However, Jeremiah also contains a link to the even more positive ending of 1 and 2 Chronicles, where Cyrus, the Persian king, released Israel from captivity. The writer of Chronicles calls the words of Cyrus a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (2 Chron. 36.20-23). Jeremiah 29.10-14 clearly prophesied 70 years of captivity, after which God would release his people.

C. Ezra

Ezra 1.1 begins the account of the return of the Jews to the land with the words from Cyrus's decree (2 Chron. 36.22) and names that return as a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. Thus, Jeremiah presents a clear link between Israel's chastisement and her restoration.

D. Geography

Nebuchadnezzar's troops first destroyed the major cities to the north and south of Jerusalem. Then, without the support of her surrounding cities, Jerusalem also fell after a long siege. Jerusalem's destruction marked the end of the settlement of Palestine that began with Joshua's great defeat of Jericho. Early in Jeremiah's ministry, he predicted the coming exile of Judah in Babylon, and later during the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah wrote that Israel would one day be restored to her land. The concept of getting back home was strong and deep for God's people, but Jeremiah placed geographical restoration squarely within a larger spiritual restoration. To "get home" physically, demanded getting home in a spiritual sense; a sense described in the miracles of Jeremiah's new covenant. The physical captivity in Babylon reflected a spiritual bondage to sin and its consequences. The promise of geographical restoration to the Promised Land reflected an inner spiritual restoration. It was outward evidence of inner forgiveness and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

THE NEW COVENANT IN JEREMIAH IN RELATION TO OTHER COVENANTS**A. Connected to Moses**

In the first exodus, God's people were led out from Egypt's captivity and into a relationship with God based on the covenant given to Moses. An exodus that led to a new relationship through a new covenant also followed the captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah spoke of the release from Babylon as a second exodus (Jer. 16.14-15; 23.7-8). That pattern of bondage, release, and relationship will be fulfilled at the end of this age when God brings complete release from the bondage of sin and death and allows the creation to enter into an unhindered relationship with him. That will be the third and final exodus from bondage to freedom. Jeremiah 31 speaks of Israel's inability to keep the Mosaic covenant (Jer. 31.32), thus excluding her from the blessings of Abraham.

But the new covenant would bring with it the ability to keep God's ways, thus opening up unhindered participation in the fullness of God's promises to Abraham concerning the land, the nation, and God's presence.

B. Release, Victory, and Rule

Jeremiah described Israel's restoration as a time of release from captivity, victory over hostile nations' attacks, and the establishment of God's perfect rule through the fulfillment of Abrahamic and Davidic promises. Jeremiah described this time as if the release, victory, and rule would happen one right after the other, and soon after the captivity took place. However, as Daniel found out, the release from Babylon and the full restoration of Israel's promises were separated by seventy weeks of years (Daniel 9.24-27), and as Jesus noted, the future time of full restoration was known only to God (Matthew 24.36).

Certainty, not chronological closeness, was the point of linking release, victory, and rule together. Although separated by thousands of years, the promised releases from oppression, victories over the nations, and the establishment of God's perfect rule will certainly happen. The actual time frame is secondary to God's people basing their present hope on a certain future. Knowing the certainty, not the date, is what provides a foundation for present repentance and hope. God's people tended to take God's threats or promises seriously only after it was too late. They put off making important decisions if they thought the deadline was far off. Jeremiah's point of present urgency would have been lost if he had told Israel that the events of victory and rule were thousands of years away. He presented future events as inevitable and certain, with present consequences for decisions of repentance and commitment, no matter how far in the future the fulfillment of the prophecies might be.