

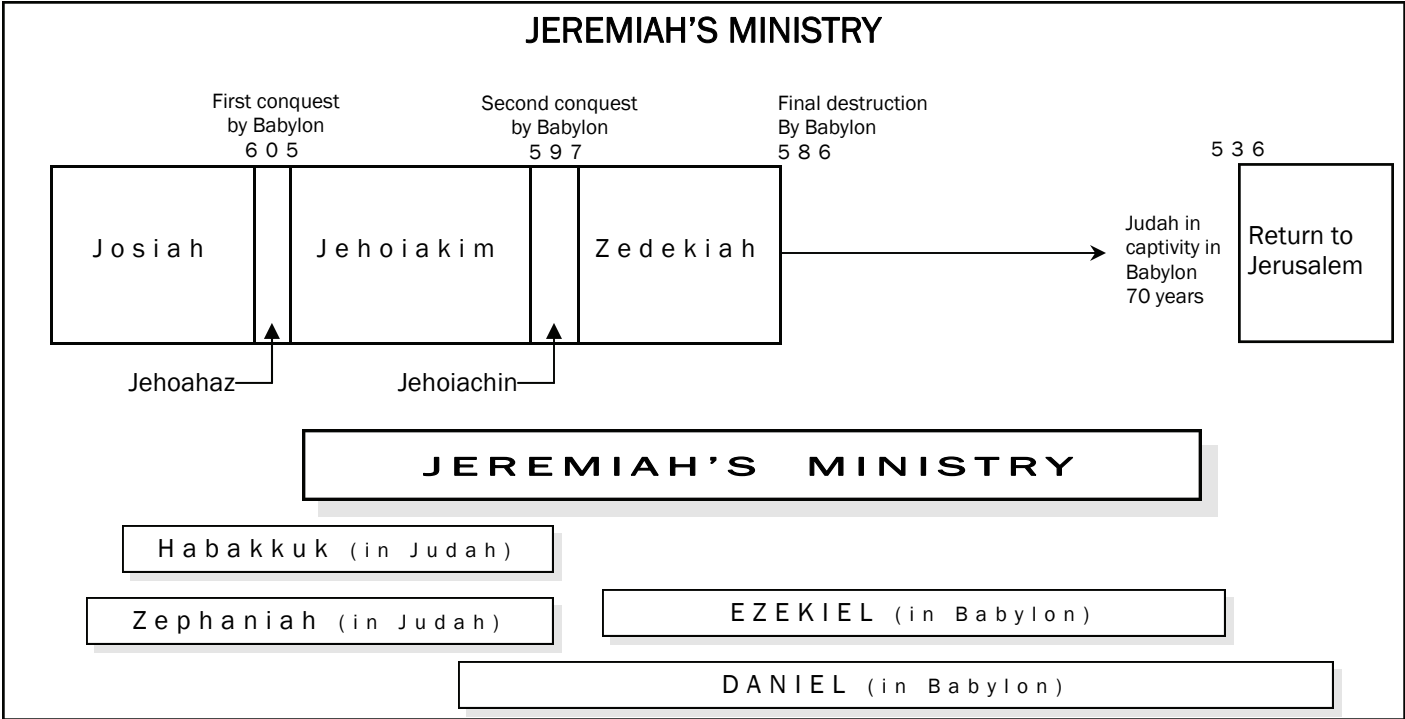
### Lamentations

The book of Lamentations is a series of five “laments” or “dirges” — dark, anguished poems of grief reading annually by Jews to this day on the traditional anniversary of the Temple’s destruction.

It’s a book filled with terror and tears. Jeremiah is traditionally credited with its authorship — but if we only see the tears of the “weeping prophet” here, we miss the point. The prophet’s tears are but a reflection of God’s own tears. Our sins and the punishment inevitably following them tears at the very heart of God. “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked” God calls out through the prophets. We find this echoed in the New Testament in Peter’s testimony that “God doesn’t want any to perish but all to come to repentance.” God’s heart for us is life and blessing, a future and a hope. Lamentations stands as an eternal testimony to the pain of God over the sins of and judgments upon humanity — and warns us of the bitter mess awaiting us if we persist in our own paths.

Day	Start	End	✓
57	Jeremiah 33:23	Jeremiah 47:7	—
58	Jeremiah 48:1	Lam 1:1	—
59	Lam 2:1	Ezekiel 12:20	—
60	Ezekiel 12:21	Ezekiel 22:39	—
61	Ezekiel 23:40	Ezekiel 35:15	—
62	Ezekiel 36:1	Ezekiel 47:12	—
63	Ezekiel 47:13	Daniel 8:27	—

These visions are wide-screen renditions of God’s sovereignty worked out among nations who couldn’t care less about God.



## E z e k i e l

Ezekiel was a priest turned prophet. At age twenty he began his ten-year training to become a priest serving in the Temple at Jerusalem. But his graduation day never came. In the year 597 BC when Ezekiel was twenty-five, the Babylonians invaded for a second time and Ezekiel was among those taken captive to Babylon. While sitting among the captives in a refugee camp in Babylon along the Kebar canal, heaven opened and launched him on a wild and eccentric prophetic career. Peterson calls him the “prophet of catastrophe”...

Ezekiel saw. He saw what the people with whom he lived either couldn't or wouldn't see. He saw in wild and unforgettable images, elaborated in exuberant detail — God at work in a catastrophic era. The denial people refused to see that catastrophe was in fact catastrophic. How could it be? God wouldn't let anything that bad happen to them. Ezekiel showed them. He showed them that, yes, there was catastrophe, but God was at work in the catastrophe, sovereignly *using* the catastrophe. He showed them so that they would be able to embrace God in the worst of times.

Considering his priestly background, it's no surprise that Ezekiel's visions culminate in an unparalleled Old Testament exploration and exhibition of the “new Jerusalem” — the new sanctuary of God restored to earth. The next time we catch such a glimpse of this city is in the closing chapters of Revelation.

## D a n i e l

Daniel was a contemporary of Ezekiel. Born in Judah, he had barely graduated from middle school before he was carted off to Babylon in the first invasion of Judah by that country. Unlike Ezekiel, Daniel didn't end up in a refugee camp. He was among some select youth who were brought into the royal palaces of Babylon for training as servants of the king. We find an almost equal mix of stories and visions in Daniel. Six stories in chapters 1-6 and four visions in chapters 7-12. As one writer puts it, the visions in Daniel serve as “wide-screen renditions of God's sovereignty worked out among nations who couldn't care less about God.” Dreams are highly prominent throughout this book. In the first half of the book Daniel interprets the dreams of others, and the latter half angels interpret his.

## Personal Reading Notes



Use this space to record the highlights — insights, observations, puzzling questions, “aha moments” — you experience during this week's reading: