

## JEREMIAH IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Jews consider Jeremiah one of the greatest prophets in their history. God He had planned on using Jeremiah even before he was born (**Jer. 1:5**). Jeremiah prophesied during a watershed moment in the history of the Jews—when Babylon destroyed the first temple and Jerusalem. The Babylonian Captivity ended Israel as a kingdom on earth never to be organized as such ever again (**Jer. 19:1-11; 22:24-30**).

Jesus came to Judah at a time that had many of the same problems and warnings of imminent judgment, though the Jews learned their lesson about worshipping foreign gods. Those false gods were replaced by idols of covetousness and a system of self-righteousness (**Luke 16:14; Romans 10:1-2**).

Three times Jeremiah is mentioned in the gospel of Matthew. These times were at key points of Jesus' life. The first time was in connection with Jesus' birth (**Matt. 2:17**). **Matthew 2:18** is a quotation from **Jeremiah 31:15**.

The second time is in **Matthew 16:14**, where the disciples answered who the Jews thought Jesus was. Jeremiah was specifically mentioned as one of the Jews' theories. It is in this conversation that Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (**v.16**). Jesus promised to build His church (**v.18**). He also began warning them that He would need to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die, then be raised from the dead on the third day (**v.21**).

The last time was in **Matt. 27:9**. This is a quotation from Zechariah, not Jeremiah. Does the Bible have a mistake in it? Absolutely not! So what is the explanation?

If you take **verse 9** out of context, you have a strong case against divine inspiration of the Bible. However, **verse 10** is the part from Jeremiah, and it is not technically a quotation. Together, **verses 9 and 10** make a compound scripture fulfillment. You need both parts (**Zechariah 11:12-13** and **Jeremiah 18:1-19:15** and **32:6-10,25** [which is practically on the same page as **Jer. 31:15**]) to get the full explanation of Old Testament events that prefigure what would happen to Jesus and consequently to Jerusalem for what they did to Jesus.

The prophecy of Zechariah uses his experience as a type of what would happen to Jesus (Joshua the high priest was also a type of Jesus in **Zechariah 6:9-14**). Zechariah served as shepherd for "*the flock of slaughter*." (**Zech. 11:4-11**). He had to fire three shepherds (hirelings with the wrong attitude—**v.8**). The covenant was ended (**v.10**), and God gave them up for slaughter (**v.9**). Since his work ended, he asked for his wages, and they gave him **30 pieces of silver** (**v.12**). The God told him to *throw it to the potter* (**v.13**). He *threw it in the Lord's house* for the potter.

It is easy to see the fulfillment in Judas betraying the Lord, the amount of money he received, and what happened to the money. What may be confusing is that Judas was the bad guy in **Matt. 27:1-10** while Zechariah was the good guy in **Zech. 11**. So where does Jeremiah fit in?

Jeremiah enters the picture as one who was mistreated in his time. He was told to buy the field when he knew Babylon was going to take the city in a few weeks. The potter connection between **Zechariah 11** and **Jeremiah** is to call attention to one who would be the true Shepherd. His price was thirty pieces of silver. He was rejected by His own (as Zechariah [**11:8**] and Jeremiah [**32:2-3**] both experienced). His rejection ushered in the same kind of catastrophe in the first century that happened in Jeremiah's day—the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. That's why **Jeremiah** is in **Matt. 27:9**.

All three passages that mention Jeremiah in Matthew point to a rejection of Jesus by the Jews. Herod sought to kill Jesus *who was born King of the Jews* (**Matt. 2:1-18**). Micah is also quoted here, referring to the birthplace of the One *from everlasting* to be ruler that would **shepherd** God's people Israel (**v.6**). Jesus warned how He would be rejected, killed and raised the third day after the conversation at Caesarea Philippi (**Matt. 16:13-28**). **Matthew 27** is the actual rejection of Jesus by the Jews, paralleling Zechariah's shepherd experience and Jeremiah's persecution.