

Jeremiah as the Prophet Like Moses

...Who Cannot Intercede Like Moses

Calling and Commission	
Jeremiah	Moses & Samuel
Yahweh to Jeremiah: “before I formed you in the womb, I have known you [ידעתוך]” (1:5)	Yahweh to Moses: “and you [Yahweh] have said, ‘I have known you’ [ידעתוך]” (Exod. 33:12) “I [Yahweh] have known you by name [וַאֲדַעְךָ בִּשְׁם]” (Exod. 33:17)
“Alas, O Lord Yahweh, look I don’t know how to speak [דבר], for I am a young man [נער]” (1:6)	“And Moses said, ‘Please, my Lord, I am not a man of words [דברים]’” (Exod. 4:10) “And the young man [נער] Samuel served Yahweh ... and the word [דבר] of Yahweh was rare in those days” (1 Sam. 3:1)
“And all that I command you, you will speak ... Look, I have put my words [דברי] in your mouth” (1:7, 9)	“I will raise up a prophet like you from among your brothers, and I will put my words [דברי] in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him” (Deut. 18:18)
“I am with you [אני עִתְךָ]” (1:8, 19)	“I will be with you [עִמָּךְ]” (Exod. 3:12) “and the young man [נער] grew up with Yahweh [וַיְהִיָּה עִמּוֹ]” (1 Sam. 2:21)

*Jeremiah is being portrayed as a fusion of portraits, combining the **Moses model** from the Torah with the **Samuel model** and the **Suffering Servant** figure from the book of Isaiah. These have all been merged together, so that Jeremiah becomes another iteration of this archetype, but with some new twists yet to be developed. – Tim Mackie*

Message	
Jeremiah	Moses & Samuel
“Do not oppress [לֹא תַעֲשֶׂק] the immigrant, orphan, or widow [אַלמָנָה]” (7:6)	“Do not oppress [לֹא תַעֲשֶׂק] the hired worker, the poor, or the widow [אַלמָנָה]” (Deut. 24:14)
“Will you steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear oaths in treachery, and burn incense to Baal and go after other gods?” (7:8)	“You shall have no other gods ... you shall not murder ... commit adultery ... steal ... bear treacherous witness” (Exod. 20:3, 11-16)
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 ... therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh (7:12)	¹² On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. (1 Sam. 3:12-13)

*Jeremiah is depicted as **Moses** was in Exodus 19–20 and Deuteronomy, calling Israel to follow the covenant laws of the Torah by protecting the vulnerable and shunning idolatry. Jeremiah is also depicted as **Samuel**, announcing the fall of Jerusalem as analogous to the destruction of the Shiloh sanctuary, which Samuel predicted in 1 Sam. 3:10-14.*

– Tim Mackie

But... Do Not Intercede!	
Jeremiah	Moses & Samuel
“But you, do not pray on behalf of [בעד התפלל] this people, and do not lift up a shout or prayer on their behalf, and don’t intercede with me, for I am not listening to you” (7:16)	“And the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against Yahweh and against you. Pray [התפלל] to Yahweh...’ And Moses prayed on behalf of [בעד התפלל] the people.” (Num. 21:7)
	“Yahweh was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, so I prayed on his behalf [בעד התפלל] ... and I prayed [התפלל] to Yahweh and I said, ‘Lord Yahweh! Do not destroy your people, or your inheritance whom you have redeemed by your greatness.’” (Deut. 9:20, 26)
	“And Samuel said, ‘gather all Israel together at Mizpah, and I will pray on your behalf [בעד התפלל] to Yahweh” (1 Sam. 7:5)
	“And the matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel, when they said, ‘Give us a king to rule us!’ And he prayed [התפלל] to Yahweh” (1 Sam. 8:6)
	“And all the people said to Samuel, ‘Pray on behalf of [בעד התפלל] your servants to Yahweh your God, that we won’t die! For we’ve added to all of our sins an evil, in asking for our own king” (1 Sam. 12:19) “As for me, God forbid that I would sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray on your behalf [בעד התפלל]” (1 Sam. 12:23)

Jeremiah is depicted as a New Moses / Samuel, but one who cannot intercede for the people because they are doomed for judgment. – Tim Mackie

Message	
Jeremiah	Moses
“Cursed is the man [ארור האיש] who does not listen to the word of this covenant” (11:3)	“Cursed is the man [ארור האיש] who makes an idol or molten image” (Deut. 27:15)
“I brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace” (11:4)	“Yahweh brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt” (Deut. 4:20)
“I will keep the oath which I swore [השבעה אשר נשבע] to your ancestors” (11:5)	“Because Yahweh loves you, he keeps his oath which he swore [השבעה אשר נשבע] to your ancestors” (Deut. 7:8)
“And I said, ‘May it be true, Yahweh’ [אמן יהוה]” (11:5)	“And all the people said, ‘May it be true!’ [אמן]” (Deut. 27:26)

In [11—20] Jeremiah continues to be depicted as a prophet like Moses / Samuel who is offering his generation the same ultimatum that Moses offered Israel in the wilderness. – Tim Mackie

But... Do Not Intercede!	
Jeremiah	Moses & Samuel
“But you, do not pray on behalf of this people, and do not lift up a shout or a prayer on their behalf, for I am not listening in the time that they call out to me, on account of their evil” (11:14)	“Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me, I would not come toward this people; send them away from my face; let them go!” (Jeremiah 15:1)
“Do not pray for good on behalf of this people, for even if they fast I am not listening for their shout” (14:11-12)	

Jeremiah is not allowed to exercise his prophetic role of intercession to prevent the divine judgment, and this is at God’s command. This theme is repeated and intensified throughout the book. – Tim Mackie

This “prophet like Moses” cannot be like Moses in one important way. God forbids his responding to the people, not once but four times.... What is clear is that an avenue of discourse is cut off for the prophet. He can no longer intercede on behalf of the people. This fact, and the restriction of the prophetic word to judgment (20,8), gives rise to persecution and challenge on the horizontal plane of Jeremiah’s personal relationships. The loss of the intercessory role, in its social dimension, gives rise to the intercessions of the prophet as individual, on his own behalf. The result is lament of his personal fate, a form of prophetic discourse not developed in other prophet books to this same degree. We do not see extensive lament in the Moses traditions either, because the intercessory role is never withdrawn from this first prophet as it is with Jeremiah. — Christopher Seitz, “The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah.”

Message	
Jeremiah	Moses
“Look, I am betting before you the way of life [חיים] and the way of death [מות]. The one who stays in this city will die by the sword ... but the one who goes over to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live.” (21:8)	“Today ... I set before you life [חיים] and death [מות], the blessing and the curse, so choose life so that you may live, you and your seed” (Deut. 30:15)
“Do justice and righteousness, and deliver what’s been stolen from the hand of the oppressed, and don’t tolerate oppression of the immigrant and the orphan and the widow” (22:4)	“Do not oppress the immigrant or afflict him, for you were immigrants in Egypt. Do not oppress any widow or orphan.” (Exod. 23:20-21)
“And nations will pass by this city and say to each other, ‘Why [על מה] did Yahweh do this to this great city?’ And they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh their God and worshipped other gods and served them.’” (22:8-9)	“And the nations will say, ‘Why [על מה] did Yahweh do this to this land? What anger is this great wrath?’ And they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh the God of their fathers ... and they went and served other gods and worshipped them.’” (Deut. 29:23-24)

*The portrait of Jeremiah as a **Moses-figure** is emphasized here in a dramatic way. The ultimatum Moses gave the Israelites in the wilderness is the same ultimatum Jeremiah offers the last generation of Judah facing Babylonian invasion. – Tim Mackie*

Jeremiah Does Not Intercede
“And King Zedekiah sent Yehukal, son of Shelemiah ... to Jeremiah the prophet saying, ‘Pray on our behalf to Yahweh our God’” (37:3)
“And they [the remnant of Judah] said to Jeremiah the prophet, ‘Let our petition come before you, and pray on our behalf to Yahweh your God, on behalf of this whole remnant’” (42:2)

This theme, [introduced in chapter 7 and repeated in chapter 11], prepares us for the two narratives later in the book where the king and remnant of Judah ask Jeremiah to pray for them, but with false motives. – Tim Mackie

Jeremiah as the Suffering Prophet *Like Isaiah's Suffering Servant*

Calling and Commission	
Jeremiah	Isaiah's Suffering Servant
“before I formed you in the womb [יצר בטן], I have known you” (1:5)	“Thus says Yahweh, your maker, the one who formed you from the womb [יצר בטן], who helps you, do not be afraid” (Isa. 44:2) “Yahweh called me from the womb [בטן], from the loins of my mother, he mentioned my name” (Isa. 49:1) “Yahweh formed me from the womb [יצר בטן] to be his servant” (Isa. 49:5)
“I have made you [נתתיך] as a prophet to the nations [גוים]” (1:5)	“I have made you [נתתיך] to be a light to the nations [גוים]” (Isa. 49:6)
“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you, to deliver you” (1:8)	“Do not be afraid, for I am with you” (Isa. 43:5)
“I have put my words in your mouth” (1:9b)	“And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says Yahweh, my Spirit which is upon you and my words which I place in your mouth” (Isa. 59:21)
The Prophet's Laments	
Jeremiah	Isaiah's Suffering Servant
“they made plots [חשבו מחשבות] against me” (11:19)	“we considered [חשבונוהו] him stricken by God” (Isa. 53:3-4)
“I am like a lamb led to slaughter [יובל לטבח]” (11:19)	“He was like a lamb led to slaughter [יובל לטבח]” (Isa. 53:7)
“Let's cut him off from the land of the living [מארץ חיים]” (11:20)	“for he was cut off from the land of the living [מארץ חיים]” (Isa. 53:8)
“Yahweh brings just righteousness [צדק] ... to you I have revealed my case [ריב]” (11:20) “You are righteous Yahweh, for I will offer my case [ריב] to you” (12:1) “Righteous [צדיק] tester ... to you I have revealed my case [ריב]” (20:12)	“Yahweh helps me ... the one who declares me righteous [צדק] is near. Who will bring a case [ריב] against me?” (Isa. 50:7-8)
“[Yahweh], know that I bear public shame because of you” (15:15)	“Thus says Yahweh to the one despised, to the one abhorred” (Isa. 49:7)
“why does my pain [כאב] endure, and my wounds [מכה] incurable, refusing to be healed” (15:18)	“He was rejected, a man of pain [כאב], knowing sickness ... stricken [מכה] by God and afflicted” (Isa. 53:3-4)
“I [Yahweh] have made you to this people like a bronze fortified wall” (15:20)	“I have set my face like a flint rock” (Isa. 50:7)

“Yahweh is with me like a mighty warrior, therefore my persecutors will stumble ... they will be **ashamed** [בוש] ... with perpetual humiliation [כלימה]” (20:11)

“I did not hide my face from humiliation [כלימה] or spit ... Yahweh helps me, therefore I am not **humiliated** [כלם]. And I know I will not be **ashamed** [בוש]” (Isa. 50:6-7)

Because Jeremiah cannot intercede, he begins to suffer in a unique way, expressed in the five laments [11:18—12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18]. These laments are strategically placed to show that (1) Jeremiah is a rejected prophet, persecuted by his own people; (2) he takes into himself the suffering of his own people, as he endures the onslaught of Babylon leading up to the siege and capture of the city. – Tim Mackie

The prophets as a group formed the prototype of the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 40—55, but it appears that Jeremiah hovered before his [= the author of Isaiah 40—55] eyes as he drew the figure of the Servant. It was the mental image of Jeremiah that made the prophetic servant in Isaiah 40—55 into a “suffering servant.” The suffering of Israel under Assyria and then Babylon dictated his choice of Jeremiah, as that one prophetic predecessor who, more than any other, endured like Israel, reproach and suffering. It was Jeremiah who came to sit as a model for his portrait of the Servant of Yahweh. The role of “prophet” included such vivid details of mental and physical anguish as we find in Jeremiah, and is the key to understanding the Servant poems in Isaiah: the servant is a martyr prophet who is rejected by the nations and his own people. – Sheldon Blank, “Studies in Deutero-Isaiah.”

Jeremiah and the Suffering One of Lamentations 3

Laments	
Jeremiah's Laments	Lamentations 3
"they made plots [מהשבות] against me [עלי]" (11:19)	"Yahweh you have heard their reproach, all their plots [מהשבות] against me [עלי]" (3:61)
"to you I have revealed my case [ריב]" (11:20)	"you have contended my case [ייב], O Lord" (3:38)
"because of your hand I sat alone [ישב בודד]" (15:17)	"He sat alone [ישב בודד], silent" (3:28)
"I became a laughingstock [הייתה לשחק] all day" (20:7)	"I became a laughingstock [הייתה לשחק] for all my people" (3:14)
"over the shattering of the daughter of my people [על שבר בת עמי] I am shattered ... I, that my head was water, and my eyes a fount for tears" (8:21, 23)	"my eyes flow with streams of water, over the shattering of the daughter of my people [על שבר בת עמי]" (3:48)
Narratives of Jeremiah's Suffering	
"Thus the LORD said to me: 'Make yourself straps and yoke-bars [עול], and put them on your neck.'" (27:2)	"it is good for a man to carry a yoke [עול]" (3:27)
"they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern [בור] of Malchiah" (38:6)	"they extinguished my life in a pit [בור]" (3:53)

Jehoiachin as a “New Joseph”

Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 52	Joseph in Genesis
Merodak-Baladan “lifted up the head” [נשא ראש] of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, “from the house of the prison” [מבית הכלוא] (52:31)	Pharaoh “lifts up the head” [נשא ראש] of the cup-bearer = elevates him out of prison (Gen. 40:13, 18-20) Pharaoh sends to have Joseph lifted “out of the pit” (Gen. 41:14, 43) = called “house of prison” [מבית הכלוא] in Gen. 39:22
Merodak-Baladan “gave him his own throne [כסא] above [מעל] the throne of the other kings with him in Babylon” (52:32)	Pharaoh elevates Joseph, saying, “only in the matter of the throne [כסא] will I be greater than you ... I have set you above [על] all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:40-41)
“And he changed his prison clothes [בגדי כלאן] and ate bread at the king’s table all the days of his life” (52:33)	Pharaoh sent to have Joseph “change his clothes” [חלף] [שמלה] to interpret the dream (Gen. 41:14) Pharaoh elevates Joseph: “he took off his ring and gave it to Joseph ... and he clothed him in linen clothes [בגדי שש]” (Gen. 41:42)

Jehoiachin, of the royal line of David, is portrayed as a “new Joseph,” exalted from prison with new clothes and royal food above the throne of all other kings. – Tim Mackie