

Symbolic Acts Performed by Jeremiah

All of these symbolic acts follow a similar pattern: instruction from God, performance by Jeremiah, and interpretation of the act. Jeremiah performed these symbolic (often dramatic and visual) acts to get the attention of his audience.

REFERENCE	SYMBOLIC ACT	SUMMARY
5:1-2	Jeremiah searches for a righteous person.	This symbolic act illustrated the hopeless moral condition of Jerusalem. God promised to forgive (spare) the city if one upright person could be found there.
13:1-11	Jeremiah wears a linen belt.	Jeremiah purchased and wore a linen belt (represented Judah). He later removed and buried it. Later the Lord instructed him to retrieve the belt which was then rotted and unfit to wear.
16:1-9	Jeremiah forbidden to marry and have children.	God commanded Jeremiah to not marry. Jeremiah would not enjoy the blessings of a home life, wife, and children—a reminder of the imminence of the nation's destruction.
18:1-12	Jeremiah goes to the potter's house.	God is sovereign and has authority over all nations and peoples. His power is absolute. Just as a potter carefully reworks the clay, so God does not give up on us when we fail Him.
19:1-15	Assembling at the Valley of Ben Hinnom.	Jeremiah purchased a clay jar and assembled leaders at Ben Hinnom. There he smashed the jar and announced that God would smash Judah because of the nation's sin.
25:15-29	Jeremiah and the cup of God's wrath.	Jeremiah took a cup (represented God's wrath) and made the representatives of different nations drink from it. These nations would be unable to refuse the cup (escape God's wrath).
27:1—28:17	Jeremiah wears a yoke.	Jeremiah made a yoke and put it on his neck to symbolize that the only way the nations could escape destruction at the hands of the Babylonians was through unconditional surrender.
32:1-15	Jeremiah buys a field.	Jeremiah purchased a field as a way of assuring the people that the Babylonian occupation would end and that life would return to normal.
35:1-19	Jeremiah and the Recabites.	Jeremiah offered wine to the Recabite family. They refused to drink because of a command given to them by an ancestor. God's people were not as loyal as this to Him or His commands.
43:8-13	Jeremiah buries stones in the pavement.	Jeremiah buried stones at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace to symbolize the fate of the exiles in Egypt as well as Egypt's fate. Nebuchadnezzar would pursue them to Egypt.
51:59-64	Scroll thrown into the Euphrates River.	Jeremiah wrote the fate of Babylon on a scroll. He instructed Seraiah to read the message in Babylon, tie a stone to the scroll, and throw it into the Euphrates, symbolizing Babylon's doom.