

# **JEREMIAH AND THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH**

*A Study in the Prophets*



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1995

*Front Cover*

Rembrandt, *Jeremiah Lamenting Over the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 1630

Oil on panel, 58 x 45 cm

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt\\_-\\_Jeremiah\\_lamenting.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_-_Jeremiah_lamenting.jpg)

# JEREMIAH AND THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH

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3	Historical Background: The Reign of Josiah Jeremiah 3:6 – 6
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# **JEREMIAH AND THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH**

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## **CLASS INTRODUCTION**

Jeremiah was a mighty prophet of God. For over 40 years, Jeremiah proclaimed a message of impending destruction upon God's people if they did not repent. The life and times of Jeremiah are told by the writers of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles and by Jeremiah himself in the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

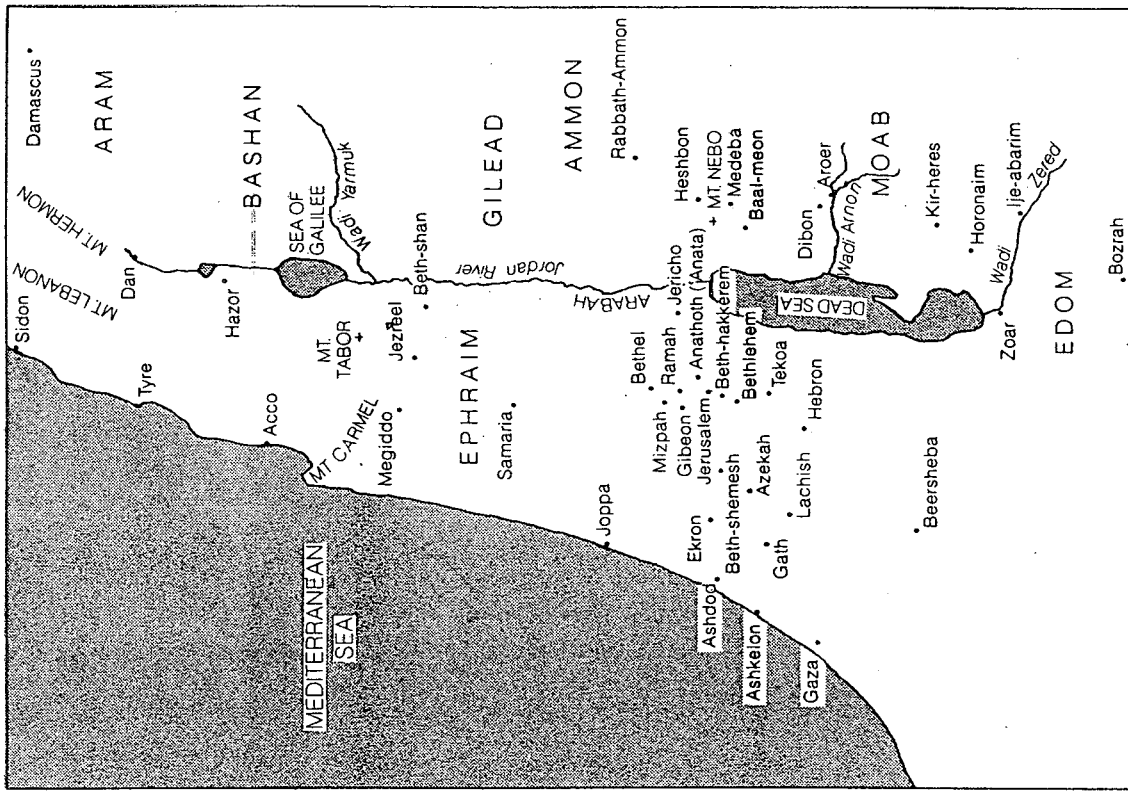
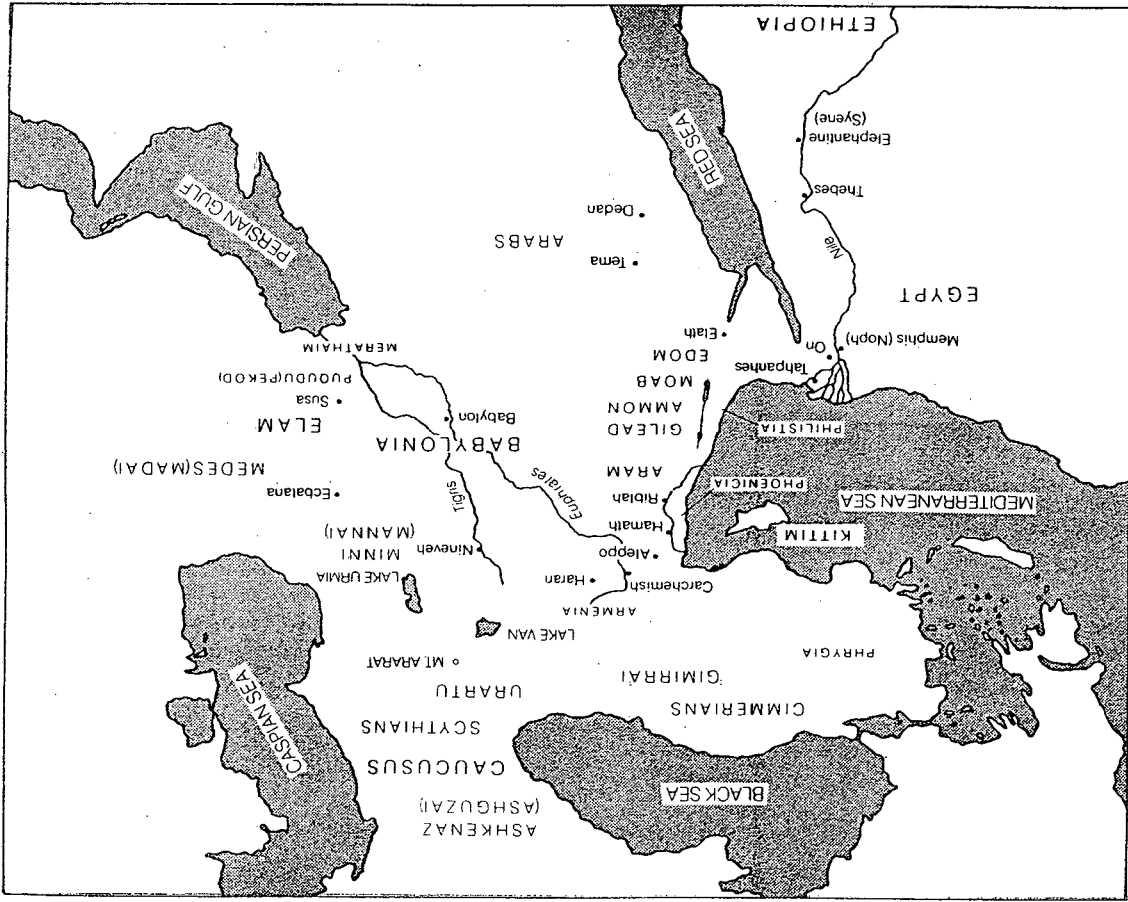
To properly understand the message of Jeremiah, it is necessary to appreciate the events taking place within the kingdom of Judah while he prophesied. Thus, this study includes a survey of the last kings of Judah. By so doing, the message of Jeremiah comes alive and applications to our times will be greatly eased. For reference, a chart placing the events taking place within the world empires, the kingdom of Judah, and the life of Jeremiah in parallel columns is provided.

The book of Jeremiah is characterized by a great deal of action. Unlike the book of Isaiah that primarily contains a record of Isaiah's message, the book of Jeremiah records many of Jeremiah's activities in addition to his prophecies. Many of these activities are directly commanded by God and contain instruction that Jeremiah is to learn firsthand.

The book of Jeremiah is a long book, the longest book in the Hebrew Bible. This study will not attempt to give "equal time" to every portion of the book. Emphasis will be placed on those sections that represent the entire work. A CHAPTER SUMMARY is given following this introduction of those chapters that are particularly noteworthy.

Another feature of the book is that its contents are not chronological. To illustrate this, a chart showing the HISTORICAL SETTING of the various units within the book has been included. For those units that are dated within the text, it is noted that the book skips forward and back in time. In particular, the book shifts between the times of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

As an aid to the student, maps of the relevant regions are provided.



# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

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## CHAPTER SUMMARY

<b>1</b>	<b>Call of Jeremiah</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>2</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>Hananiah's False Prophecy</b>
<b>3</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>Letter to Captives in Babylon</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>30</b>	
<b>5</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>The New Covenant</b>
<b>6</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>Jeremiah Buys a Field</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>The Temple Sermon</b>	<b>33</b>	
<b>8</b>		<b>34</b>	
<b>9</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>The Rechabites</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Dead Idols / Living God</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>The Scroll of Jeremiah</b>
<b>11</b>		<b>37</b>	
<b>12</b>		<b>38</b>	
<b>13</b>	<b>Linen Sash / Wine Bottles</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>The Fall of Jerusalem</b>
<b>14</b>		<b>40</b>	
<b>15</b>		<b>41</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>Jeremiah not to marry</b>	<b>42</b>	
<b>17</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>Jeremiah taken to Egypt</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>The Potter and the Clay</b>	<b>44</b>	
<b>19</b>		<b>45</b>	
<b>20</b>		<b>46</b>	} <b>Prophecies Against the Nations</b>
<b>21</b>		<b>47</b>	
<b>22</b>	<b>Prophecies - Sons of Josiah</b>	<b>48</b>	
<b>23</b>		<b>49</b>	
<b>24</b>	<b>Good and Bad Figs</b>	<b>50</b>	
<b>25</b>	<b>70 Year Captivity Foretold</b>	<b>51</b>	
<b>26</b>		<b>52</b>	

DATE	WORLD EMPIRES	JUDAH	JEREMIAH
640 BC	[Assyria world rule began with Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727). Judah submits to Assyria; Israel rebels, but is conquered and deported (722/21). Under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, Assyria expanded to its greatest extent when it conquered Egypt in 663. Overextended, Assyria weakens. Psammetichus I withholds tribute, thus freeing Egypt of Assyrian rule.]	JOSIAH (640-609) Son of Amon 8 yrs. old when he began to reign. 2 K.22:1	Call of Jeremiah (13th year of Josiah; 627) Jer.1:2
630	627 - Ashurbanipal dies. Assyria continues to grow weaker. 626 - Nabopolassar rejects Assyrian rule over Babylon.	632 - "In the eighth year of his reign,...., he began to seek after the God of David his father: and, 628 - in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, ...". 2 Chr.34:3 [Probably, during this time period that Judah becomes nominally free from Assyria] 622 - In 18th year, he finds the "book of the law". 2 K.22:3ff. Reinstates the Passover. 2 K.23:21-23.	"Temple Address" (Date uncertain) Jer. 7
620	616 - Psammetichus aids Assyria - checks advance of Babylonians. 614 - Median king, Cyaxares, takes Asshur. 612 - Fall of Ninevah to Nabopolassar.	JOSIAH KILLED AT MEGIDDO. 2 K.23:29 JEHOIAH (609; 3 mo.)(Shallum) 2nd son of Josiah JEHOIAKIM (609-598) 1st son of Josiah	Jeremiah mourns Josiah's death. 2 Chr.35:25; Jer.22:10,15f. Jeremiah tells of Jehoahaz's fate. Jer.22:11
610	610 - Assyrian remnant defeated at Harran. 609 - Battle of Megiddo between Judah and Pharaoh Necho II. - Necho takes Jehoahaz captive to Egypt where he dies. 2 K.23:34	605/4-1st group of Judah taken captive. Dan.1:1 605/4-Jehoiakim submits to Babylonian rule. 601 - Jehoiakim rejects Babylonian rule.2 K.24:1	Jeremiah dictates scroll to Baruch. Jer.36 Scroll read to those fasting in Jerusalem. Jeremiah foretells Jehoiakim's fate. Jer.22:13f
600	605 - Battle of Carchemish. Necho defeated by Nebuchadnezzar II. Jer.46:2 604 - Babylonians captured Ashkelon. cf. Jer.47:5-7; Zeph.2:4-7 601 - Nebuchadnezzar marches against Egypt but is unsuccessful. 597 - Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem on March 16 (cf. Babylonian Chronicle). Temple plundered. 2nd group taken to Babylon. (Ezekiel, et.al., Ezek. 1:1) 594/3 - Ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon meet in Jerusalem to discuss revolt against Babylon. Jer.27:3;28:1	JEHOIACHIN (597/7;3 mo.10 days) (Coniah) Son of Jehoiakim ZEDEKIAH (597-586) Son of Josiah 594/3-Zedekiah goes to Babylon possibly to assure Nebuchadnezzar of his allegiance. Jer.51:59 589 - Zedekiah rebels against Babylon.2 K.24:20	Jeremiah foretells Jehoiachin's future. Jer.22:24-30; 52:31-34; 2 K.25:27-30 Jeremiah sends letter to captives in Babylon. False prophets foretell the length of Babylonian rule to 2 years. Jeremiah prophesies that it will be 70 years. Jer.28:32-35; cf. 2 Chr. 36:21f.
590	589/8 - Babylonian army places Jerusalem under a siege. 2 K.25:1ff 588/7 - Pharaoh Hophra enters Palestine. Babylonian army cuts off the siege to meet the Egyptian challenge. Jer.37:5	587/6 - Destruction of Jerusalem. 2 K.25:1-17 - Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliah as governor of Judah. 2 K.25:23 ? - Gedaliah assassinated.2 K.25:25; Jer.41:1	Jeremiah warns that the Babylonians will return. Being charged with treason, he is cast into prison. Jeremiah tells Zedekiah to surrender. Jer.38:14 Jeremiah is released from prison. Jer.39:11-14 Jeremiah laments Jerusalem's destruction. (The Book of Lamentations) Jeremiah forced to go to Egypt. Jer.42-44
580	582 - Nebuchadnezzar deports some additional Jews. Jer. 52:30		

# THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH: HISTORICAL SETTING

JEREMIAH	JOSIAH	JEHOAHAZ	JEHOIAKIM	JEHOIACHIN	ZEDEKIAH	GEDALIAH
1						
2 - 3:5						
3:6 - 6						
7 - 10						
11						
12						
13:1-17						
13:18-27						
14 - 15						
16 - 17						
18 - 20						
21						
22:1-19(23)						
22:20(24)-30						
23:1-8						
23:9-40						
24						
25:1-14						
25:15-38						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30 - 31						
32						
33						
34						
35						
36						
37						
38						
39						
40 - 43:6(7)						
43:7(8) - 44						
45						
46 - 48						
49:1-33						
49:34-35						
50 - 51						
52						



# **JEREMIAH - A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

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## **I. APPROACHING THE BOOK**

### **A. HISTORICAL BOOKS VS. PROPHETICAL BOOKS**

1. Our View
  - a) English Bible divided into the Law, History, Wisdom Literature, Major and Minor Prophets.
  - b) Consequently, we tend to see different purposes for books within each division.
  - c) Books of History are to convey the historical framework; prophetic books are to reveal God's will.
2. Hebrew View (which better reflects the Biblical perspective)
  - a) Hebrew Bible divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.
  - b) Prophets contained both the books of the Prophets and the books of History.
  - c) Thus, prophets are the *interpreters* of history. Likewise, the books of Samuel, Kings, etc. are not simply accounts of history, but are a record of God's purposes.

### **B. NATURE OF PROPHETICAL BOOKS**

1. Prophecy is too readily seen exclusively as foretelling.
2. However, prophecy is first the proclaiming of God's will to those who heard. Foretelling only used in contexts which speak of future hope--very similar to the way in which the apostles speak of the second coming and heaven.

## **II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

- A. Jeremiah receives his call by God in the 13th year of Josiah's reign (627 BC).
- B. Josiah is the last good king in Judah. During his reign, Judah is independent of control by Assyria (unlike his predecessors) or Babylon (Babylon conquers Assyria, 612-610 BC). Josiah dies in battle against Necho, king of Egypt (609 BC).
- C. Josiah is first succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz, but Necho quickly replaces him with Jehoiakim, another of Josiah's sons, who reigns 11 years (609-598 BC).
- D. In 605, Nebuchadnezzar deals a major defeat to the Egyptian forces at Carchemish, thus exposing Judah to Babylon's onslaught.
- E. It is during Jehoiakim's reign, that Nebuchadnezzar first subjects Judah and takes captives to

- Babylon (including Daniel, cf. Daniel 1:1) (605/4 BC). Jehoiakim rebels against Babylon in 601 BC, apparently encouraged by some minor successes Egypt had over Babylon.
- F. Jehoiakim is succeeded by his son, Jehoiachin, who reigns only 3 months before Nebuchadnezzar conquers Judah and deports Jehoiachin and others to Babylon.
  - G. Nebuchadnezzar installs Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, as king of Judah who reigns 11 years. However, in his 9th year (?), Zedekiah rebels against Nebuchadnezzar.
  - H. Nebuchadnezzar executes a two-year campaign in destroying the cities of Judah and the total destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple.
  - I. Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliah as governor of the land, but Gedaliah is soon assassinated. Against the Lord's command, many flee to Egypt and forcefully take Jeremiah with them.

### **III. THE ESSENCE OF THE BOOK**

- A. **CENTRAL MESSAGE:** God's people have broken their covenant with God, therefore the curses within the covenant will be imposed. That is, God will eject them from the land of promise by means of a nation would is more wicked.
- B. **CENTRAL CHARACTERS:** God, Jeremiah, Kings (princes), Prophets, Priests, the people.
  - 1. Kings, prophets, and priests are held up as being especially accountable for the sins of the people.

**PART A: INTRODUCTION**

Jeremiah prophesied during the last kings of Judah prior to the Babylonian captivity. Prophesying about 100 years after Isaiah, Jeremiah was contemporary with the prophets Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Review the chart entitled THE PROPHETS following this lesson.

At the time of Jeremiah's work, the northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians. Soon after the beginning of Jeremiah prophetic career, Assyria would be overtaken by the Babylonians. Thus, it would be the Babylonian Empire which posed the greatest threat to the southern kingdom of Judah. Foreseeing this, Jeremiah warned God's people to repent from their multiple sins and return to God before it was too late. Unfortunately, Judah's refusal to repent brought about their destruction in a series of conquests at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon.

**PART B: THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH**

1. Complete the following chart for the last kings of Judah.

<b>KING</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE REFERENCE</b>	<b>LENGTH OF REIGN</b>	<b>KING'S AGE (START/END)</b>
Manasseh	2 Kings 21:1		
Amon	2 Kings 21:19		
Josiah	2 Kings 22:1		
Jehoahaz	2 Kings 23:31		
Jehoiakim	2 Kings 23:36		
Jehoiachin	2 Kings 24:8		
Zedekiah	2 Kings 24:18		

2. The relationship between the reigns of Josiah and his sons is illustrated by the chart entitled THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH following this lesson. Study the chart with the associated Bible references and notes, and answer the following questions.
  - a. How many sons did Josiah have? How many ruled as King?
  - b. Normally, a king is succeeded by his son. Occasionally, a brother of a king will ascend the throne if the king has no son, or if his son is too young to assume the responsibility of kingship. What succession is very unusual involving the heirs of Josiah?

**PART C: JEREMIAH 1:1-3**

1. Of which tribe did Jeremiah belong?
2. Locate Anathoth on a map. Approximately how far is it from Jerusalem?
3. During the reign of which kings did Jeremiah prophesied?
4. Based on the time references in Jeremiah 1:2 and 3, how many years did Jeremiah prophesied?

[As we will see later, Jeremiah continued his work in Jerusalem after its fall until he was taken to Egypt.]

# THE PROPHETS

## SAMUEL

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<i>10th Century BC</i>	SAUL
	DAVID
	SOLOMON
	<u>JUDAH</u>
	REHOBAM
	<u>ISRAEL</u>
	JEROBOAM

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<i>9th Century BC</i>	<b>ELIJAH</b>
	<b>OBADIAH</b> (Edom) ?
	<b>ELISHA</b>
	<b>JONAH</b> (Ninevah) ?
	<b>JOEL</b> ?

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<i>8th Century BC</i>	<b>AMOS</b>
	<b>HOSEA</b>
	FALL OF SAMARIA
	<b>ISAIAH</b>
	<b>MICAH</b>

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<i>7th Century BC</i>	<b>NAHUM</b>
	<b>ZEPHANIAH</b>
	<b>JEREMIAH</b>
	<b>HABAKKUK</b>
	<b>OBADIAH</b> ?
	<b>DANIEL</b> (Babylon)

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<i>6th Century BC</i>	DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM
	<b>EZEKIEL</b> (Babylon)

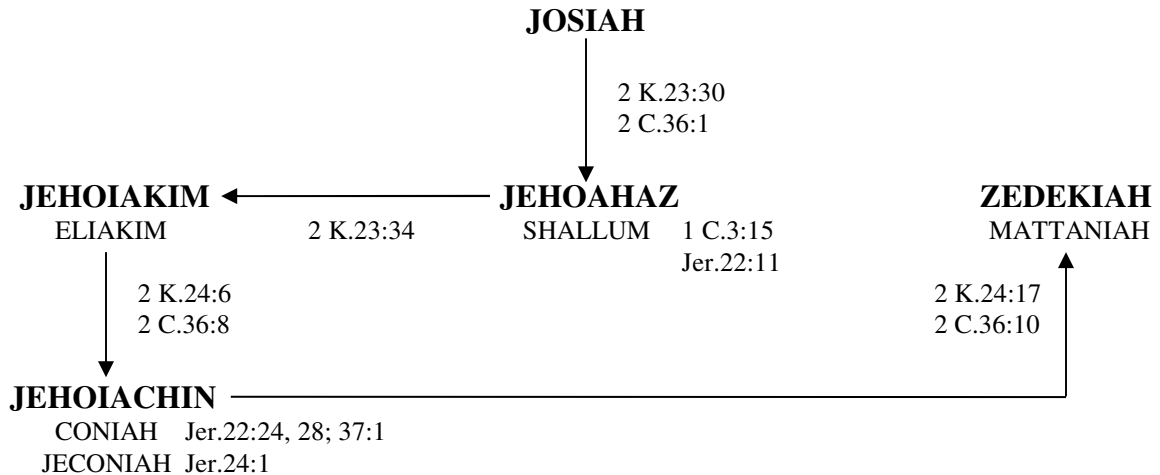
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<i>5th Century BC</i>	<b>HAGGAI</b>
	<b>ZECHARIAH</b>
	ESTHER
	EZRA
	<b>MALACHI</b> NEHEMIAH
	<b>JOEL</b> ?

## THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH

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- “The sons of Josiah were Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum.” (1 Chronicles 3:15)
    - As shown above, Jehoahaz was the first son of Josiah to succeed as king. Jehoahaz is to be identified with Shallum, not Johanan (Jeremiah 22:11).
    - Except for Johanan, the order of the sons listed in 1 Chronicles 3 is not the order of their birth. Jehoiakim was about 2 years older than Jehoahaz (compare 2 Kings 23:31 with 23:36) and about 15 years older than Zedekiah (compare 2 Kings 23:36 with 24:8 and 24:18).
    - Jehoahaz and Zedekiah were ‘full’-brothers; their mother was Hamutal (2 Kings 23:31; 24:18). Jehoiakim was their half-brother with Zebudah being his mother (2 Kings 23:36).
    - Josiah was only 14 or 15 years old when Jehoahaz was born (compare 2 Kings 22:1 with 23:36), not to mention Johanan.
  - In 2 Chronicles 36:10, Zedekiah is called the ‘brother’ of Jehoiachin (KJV, ASV, RSV), although, in fact, Zedekiah was Jehoiachin’s uncle (2 Kings 24:17; Jeremiah 37:1). Apparently, the Hebrews used the term ‘brother’ to refer to other relatives (cf. NASV, NIV marg.; compare Genesis 14:12, 14; 29:12f).
  - According to 2 Kings 24:8, Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign, but 2 Chronicles says he was 8 years old. It would appear that the difference is due to a scribal error.
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**PART A: THE REIGNS OF MANASSEH AND AMON**

TEXT: 2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33

Although Jeremiah did not prophesy during the times of Manasseh and Amon, it was their evil acts that created a need for God to send Jeremiah to his people.

1. The writer of 2 Kings summarizes the reign of Manasseh as follows: "And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel." (21:2)
  - a. Who did Manasseh use as a model in doing the evil that he did?
  - b. What judgment had the Lord passed on these nations?
  - c. List the evil acts of Manasseh as listed in 2 Kings 21.
    - 1) (v.3)
    - 2) (v.3)
    - 3) (v.3)
    - 4) (v.3)
    - 5) (v.4-5)
    - 6) (v.6)
    - 7) (v.6)
    - 8) (v.6)
    - 9) (v.6)
    - 10) (v.7)
    - 11) (v.16)
2. What would be the punishment for Manasseh's evil?
3. What additional information about Manasseh's life is recorded in 2 Chronicles 33:10-17?

[It's interesting that one book of the Apocrypha is entitled THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH, but it is probably not authentic.]
4. How did Amon's reign compare to Manasseh's? (2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25)

**PART B: JEREMIAH 1:4 - 3:5**

1. The call of Jeremiah is said to have taken place in "the thirteenth year of [Josiah's] reign" (1:2).
  - a. What year would this be?
  - b. What was Jeremiah's excuse for not wanting to accept the Lord's call?
  - c. What two assurances did the Lord give Jeremiah that negated his excuse?
    - 1) (1:8)
    - 2) (1:9)
  - d. What was Jeremiah's commission? (1:10)
  
2. The Lord reveals his intentions to Jeremiah by the means of two images (1:11-16). What two things did Jeremiah see, and what was the meaning of each?
  - 1)
  - 2)
  
3. The Lord "bring[s] charges" (2:9) against the nation of Judah. For each of the following sections, what is the specific charge brought by the Lord?
  - 2:5-8
  - 2:9-13
  - 2:14-19
  - 2:20-25
  - 2:26-28
  - 2:29-30
  - 2:31-32
  - 2:33 - 3:5
  
4. Which segment of Judah's society receives special condemnation by the Lord? (compare 1:18; 2:8, 26)



**PART A: THE REIGN OF JOSIAH**

TEXT: 2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30; 2 Chronicles 34 - 35

1. How do the biblical writers summarize the reign of Josiah? (2 K.22:2; 23:25)
2. What did Josiah do in each of the following years in his reign?

YEAR OF REIGN	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	ACTS OF JOSIAH
8 <sup>th</sup>	2 Chronicles 34:3	
12 <sup>th</sup>	2 Chronicles 34:3	
18 <sup>th</sup>	2 Chronicles 34:8 34:14 35:19	

Review Question: In what year of Josiah's reign was Jeremiah called by God?

3. While repairing the house of the Lord, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law.
  - a. What was Josiah's reaction when the book was read to him by Shaphan the scribe?
  - b. What did Josiah require of all the people? (2 K.23:1-3; 2 C.34:29-33)
4. Josiah's reforms were far-reaching and sweeping. Consider the consequences of this reform.
  - a. Were Josiah's reforms effective in restoring true worship in Judah? (2 C.34:33)
  - b. What promise did Josiah receive from God since he humbly accepted the words read to him from the Book of the Law?
  - c. Did the righteous acts of Josiah and the people repeal the judgment God had pronounced on Judah for the sins of Manasseh? (compare 2 K.21:10-15 and 2 K.23:26-27)

**PART B: JEREMIAH 3:6 - 6**

This section of prophecies is prefaced with the statement that these things were spoken to Jeremiah "in the days of Josiah the king." Whether that refers to only some or to all the prophecies is uncertain.

1. In 3:11, the Lord says, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah." Why was Judah more guilty? (3:6-10)
2. Portraits of the nation who will overtake Judah are sprinkled throughout Jeremiah's prophecies. List the descriptions found in the following passages:

VERSE	DESCRIPTION	VERSE	DESCRIPTION
1:14		5:15c	
4:7a		:15d	
:7b		5:16	
4:13a		6:1	
:13b		6:22a	
:13c		:22b	
4:16		6:23a	
5:6		:23b	
5:15a		:23c	
:15b			

3. These descriptions indicate that the destroying nation will come from the "north".
  - a. If these prophecies were given during the time of Josiah, which nation was the "northern" power at that time?
  - b. However, which nation ultimately destroyed Judah? Did Jeremiah necessarily know at this time that God would use Babylon and not Assyria to destroy Judah?
  - c. In any case, both Assyria and Babylon would more accurately be described as lying to the *east* of Judah. So, why is it stated that the conquering power is from the north?

[Comment: Some commentators have supposed that the foe from the north refers to the Scythians based on some statements in the history of Herodotos. Although it is possible that the Scythians could have troubled Judah during the reign of Josiah, they certainly did not "destroy" Judah. In addition, other references in Jeremiah to the north clearly refer to the Babylonians (13:20; 25:9).]

4. Not only does the Lord warn Judah by describing the might and terribleness of Babylon, he also pictures for them the magnitude of the destruction that will take place. Summarize the extent of the destruction as described in 4:6-8, 23-26; 5:17.

5. Although the destruction of Judah will be severe, on several occasions Jeremiah states that the Lord will not make a "complete (or, full) end" of them (cf. 4:27; 5:10, 18).
  - a. What are *two reasons* why the Lord would not destroy everyone?
    - 1) (5:19)
    - 2) (3:11-18)
  - b. Explain the statement in 3:16 concerning the ark of the covenant. Why would it no longer be remembered?
6. As in chapter 2, God constantly "makes his case" against Judah in this section to justify his destruction of her. It is as though God does not want to destroy Judah, but when he considers all her sins there is nothing else to do but destroy her. [Note the rhetorical questions God asks: "How shall I pardon you for this?" (5:7); "Shall I not punish them for these things?", "Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?" (5:9,29)] List all the sins of Judah (compare with the list made in Lesson 2 from chapter 2).
7. As was also noted in chapter 2, God specifically holds the rulers, priests, and prophets accountable for the sins of Judah. (cf. 4:9; 5:13, 28, 30-31; 6:13). In particular, what message did the false prophets proclaim? (5:12-13; 6:13-14)

**PART A: THE RULE AND FALL OF ASSYRIA**

Assyria played a pivotal role in the fortunes of Israel and, to a lesser extent, of Judah. For about 130 years, Assyria held the dominant position in the Near East, only to be overthrown by Babylon. This section surveys the rule and fall of Assyria. Read the scriptures given. It will be useful to refer to the chart listing the kings of Judah, Israel, and Assyria in parallel columns as you study this section.

*Assyrian Rule*

Assyrian domination began with the ascension of Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) (745-27) which coincided with the rule of Menahem (752-42) in Israel and Jotham (750-32) in Judah. Menahem offered no resistance to Assyria and willingly gave tribute to Tiglath-Pileser. Apparently, Menahem thought Tiglath-Pileser would serve as an ally to strengthen his position within Israel (2 Kings 15:19-20). On the other hand, during the reign of Jotham, Judah was able to remain free of Assyrian control.

*The Revolt of Israel and the Subsistence of Judah*

After the death of Menahem, his son, Pekahiah, ruled for two years before he was assassinated by Pekah. Pekah's motivation appears to be that he wanted to free Israel of Assyrian rule. Thus, Pekah and his co-conspirator Rezin, the king of Syria, try to compel Judah's assistance (2 Kings 15:36-38; 16:5-6). Ahaz, the king of Judah, resists their efforts and appeals directly to Tiglath-Pileser for aid (2 Kings 16:7). Tiglath-Pileser obliges Ahaz by conquering Syria and the northern portions of Israel and deporting their inhabitants (2 Kings 15:29; 16:9). But the price was high; Judah is now submissive to Assyria. In Israel, Pekah rules the reduced kingdom for a couple of more years before he is assassinated by Hoshea.

*The Fall of Samaria*

Tiglath-Pileser is succeeded by his son, Shalmaneser V (727-23/22). Hoshea tries to take advantage of this change in power, by withholding tribute from Assyria, thinking he will be supported by So, the king of Egypt. However, Shalmaneser handily conquers all of Israel with Samaria falling in 723 BC. Thus ends the northern kingdom of Israel.

*The Rebellion of Hezekiah*

Judah, under Hezekiah, continues to be a vassal of Assyria during the reign of Sargon II (723/22 - 705). But upon Sargon's death, when his son, Sennacherib, ascends the throne, Hezekiah, along with many other rulers, including Merodach-baladan of Babylon, try to throw off Assyrian rule. Yet, during a series of campaigns in 703 to 701, Sennacherib is successful in reasserting Assyrian control (2 Kings 18:13-16), although the Lord protects Jerusalem from total destruction (2 Kings 18:17 - 19:37). It is in this context, however, that God foretells the day when Babylon will overtake Judah (2 Kings 20). [Note that 2 Kings 18:13 - 20:19 parallels Isaiah 36 - 39.]

### The Freedom of Judah during Josiah's Reign

Judah continued to be a vassal of Assyria during the long reign of Manasseh and the reign of his son Amon. But Assyria grew weak during this time period, so that by the time of Josiah, Judah was, for all practical matters, a free and independent nation again. Assyria had too many troubles of its own to be concerned with Judah.

### The Fall of Assyria to Babylon

In 626/25, Nabopolassar was able to assert himself as the ruler of Babylon and even began to make advances into Assyria. Assyria, however, gained assistance from Psammetichus of Egypt who helps check Babylonian advances temporarily. In 614, the Median king Cyzaxes took Asshur. Joining up with Nabopolassar, they destroyed Ninevah in 612. Remnants of the Assyrian army fled to Haran, but the Babylonians defeated them there in 610. Ashurbanipal, the last Assyrian king, fled south to meet up with Necho's Egyptian forces who helped him try to retake Haran in 609. They were soundly defeated which ended the Assyrian empire. Interestingly, Josiah was killed at Megiddo trying to stop Necho's advance to the north. [Compare 2 Kings 23:29 in the KJV and some more recent translation. What is the difference?]

### **PART B: JEREMIAH 7 - 10**

1. Jeremiah is given a message to proclaim while standing in the "gate of the Lord's house" (7:1-15).
  - a. What was the "lie" (7:4) that some were apparently telling?
  - b. Was there any merit to this lie? (Consider the case when Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem.)
  - c. How does Jeremiah's reference to Shiloh fit his message? (7:12f)
2. Jeremiah 10 is one of the great chapters of the Old Testament in contrasting God to idols. [After reading Jeremiah 10, compare Isaiah 44:6-20; 46:1-11.]
  - a. The thought of this section is summarized in verse 8b: "A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine". Why is idolatry *worthless* according to Jeremiah?
  - b. By contrast, how is God superior to the idols? (10:11ff)

**JEREMIAH 11 - 15:9**

1. What is the *fundamental* reason destruction was going to overtake Judah? (11:1-8)
  
2. In Jeremiah 11:18ff, Jeremiah's life is threatened by his brethren in Anathoth.
  - a. What evoked this anger by his brethren?
  
  - b. What punishment would God impose on them? (11:22-23)
  
  - c. What *two questions* does Jeremiah ask God? (12:1)
    - 1)
  
    - 2)
  
  - d. Why does Jeremiah ask these questions?
  
  - e. God's initial answer is in 12:5 (,6?). What does God mean by this answer?
  
3. Jeremiah's prophecies are not limited to the people of Judah. (12:14-17)
  - a. What other people are addressed by Jeremiah?
  
  - b. What is going to happen to these people and why?
  
  - c. What future possibility is held out for these people and on what condition?

4. Jeremiah 13:1-11 records an episode where Jeremiah's actions as required by God contain within them a lesson God wanted Jeremiah to learn.
  - a. What did God ask Jeremiah to do?
  - b. What lesson did this convey?
  - c. What is the significance that the piece of clothing God used in this illustration was a "linen sash" (or, "loincloth", NRSV)?
5. Jeremiah 13:12 records a *proverb* that Jeremiah was to recite to the people. What is the proverb and what is its meaning?
6. Besides using the powerful nation of Babylon to execute his justice, what other means did God use to chastise his people? (14:1-10)
7. The people of Judah were stubborn in their refusal to repent and turn back to God. Who gave support to the people's stubborn view? (14:13-16)
8. The Lord's resolve to punish Judah is seen in two statements repeated throughout this section.
  - a. What does God tell Jeremiah not to do? (11:14; 14:11)
  - b. What does God refuse to accept? (11:11, 14; 14:12; 15:1)

Why?

**THE REIGNS OF JEHOAHAZ, JEHOIAKIM, JEHOIACHIN, AND ZEDEKIAH AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM**

TEXT: 2 Kings 23:30b - 25; 2 Chronicles 36

The Biblical record of the events leading to the fall of Jerusalem is supplemented by a section of the Babylonian Chronicles which was uncovered in 1956.

1. Josiah's attempt to stop the advance of Pharaoh Necho of Egypt at Megiddo failed with Josiah dying in battle. As a result, Judah became subject to Egypt.
  - a. Who was the people's choice to succeed Josiah as king?
  - b. But who was Necho's choice? Do we know why Necho wanted Jehoiakim?  
  
[After defeating Josiah at Megiddo, Necho proceeded to Haran where he attempted to aid the remnants of the Assyrian army against the Babylonians. Unsuccessful, Necho returns to Riblah in Syria where he summoned Jehoahaz.]
  - c. So, how long did Jehoahaz rule?
  - d. How was his relationship to God described?
  - e. What was Jehoahaz's fate?
2. For about three years, Egypt was able to maintain control of Syria and Palestine.
  - a. As a subject to Necho, how much tribute did Jehoiakim have to pay?
  - b. In 605 BC, the Babylonian forces had gain sufficient strength to cross the Euphrates and defeat the Necho's army at Carchemish. Thus, Necho had to retreat back to Egypt which left Judah accessible to Babylonia. Although Egypt was able to keep Babylonia from conquering her lands, she was never able to exert control in Palestine again (2 Kings 24:7).
3. Following his victory at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar leads his army through Palestine. However, the death of his father, Nabopolassar, required Nebuchadnezzar to return to Babylon to secure his position as king. But early the next year (604) he comes back to Palestine and Jehoiakim submits to his rule.
  - a. The writers of Kings and Chronicles do not tell us what happen at this time. But what does Daniel 1:1f record taking place?

[As we will see later, Jeremiah also tells us of some events in Judah during this time period.]



- b. Jehoiakim is apparently not content to be a servant of Nebuchadnezzar. What does he do after three years? (2 Kings 24:1; 601 BC)

[The Babylonian Chronicle records that in 601 BC Babylon suffered a setback from the hands of the Egyptians. Perhaps this emboldens Jehoiakim to revolt.]

- 4. Jehoiachin succeeded his father Jehoiakim as king, but he only ruled for a very short time (3 months, 10 days). It was during his reign that Nebuchadnezzar returns to conquer Jerusalem on March 16, 597 (cf. Babylonian Chronicle).

- a. Who does Nebuchadnezzar take captive to Babylon?

- b. Which prophet is believed to be among the captives?

- c. What does he take from Jerusalem?

- 5. Nebuchadnezzar installs Zedekiah as king. After several years, Zedekiah also rebelled which brought the swift response of Babylon.

- a. How long did Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem before it fell? (25:1-4)

- b. Using the date given above for the fall of Jerusalem in Jehoiachin's reign, what is the date of this event?

- c. What was Zedekiah's punishment for his act of rebellion? (25:7)

- d. What did Nebuchadnezzar have Nebuzaradan, his captain of the guard, do? (25:8-21)

- 6. With Jerusalem destroyed, who did the Babylonians appoint as governor of Judah? (25:22)

What is his fate? (25:25)

[Gedaliah's assassins flee to Egypt. As we will see, they force Jeremiah to go with them.]

**JEREMIAH 15:10 - 23:40**

1. Jeremiah 15:10-21 records Jeremiah's complaint and the Lord's reassurance.
  - a. What is Jeremiah's complaint?
  - b. What is the Lord's promise? (compare 1:7-10, 18-19)
  
2. In Jeremiah 16:1-13, the Lord forbids Jeremiah from doing three things. What are these things and why are they forbidden by God?
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
  
3. "The Lord lives" is a statement of faith made by all of God's people (Jeremiah 16:14-15; cf. 23:7-8).
  - a. What special event in their history did the Israelites view as demonstrating God's mercy and power?
  - b. However, what event would supersede this past event?
  
4. A *contrast* is given between 17:5-6 and 17:7-8. List the contrasting phases.

17:5 - 6	17:7 - 8

5.
  - a. Which particular law does God single out as a test of their obedience? (17:19ff)
  - b. What would be the blessing if they obeyed this law? (17:24-26)
  - c. Therefore, is this law more important than others? (compare 22:1-4)
6. In chapter 18, the Lord sends Jeremiah to observe a potter at work.
  - a. What is the potter's task?
  - b. In particular, what happens as the Jeremiah was watching the potter?
  - c. What is the lesson concerning the "marred" vessel?
  - d. This lesson is also taught in other scriptures. Read the following passages and note the context for each passage:  
  
Isaiah 45:9  
  
Isaiah 64:8  
  
Romans 9:20-23
7. As a teaching aide, the Lord has Jeremiah use a potter's flask (Jeremiah 19).
  - a. Where does the Lord have Jeremiah give this lesson?  
  
Why? (cf. Jeremiah 7:31-32; 2 Kings 23:10)
  - b. What is Jeremiah instructed to do with the flask, and what lesson does it teach?
8. Jeremiah 20:7ff is more of Jeremiah's testimony to the mistreatment he received.
  - a. As an example, what particular mistreatment is given in 20:1-6?
  - b. What would be the outcome of this incident?

9. As Nebuchadnezzar wages war with Jerusalem, Zedekiah anxiously inquires of Jeremiah concerning the outcome.
  - a. What does Zedekiah hope the Lord will do? (21:2)
  - b. However, what is the Lord's answer?
  - c. What alternative does the Lord give his people? (21:8-10)
  
10. The prophecies in 21:11 - 22:30 are directed to the kings.
  - a. What is the primary responsibility of a king? (22:3)
  - b. What was to be the fate of each of the following kings:  
Jehoahaz (Shallum)  
Jehoiakim  
Jehoiachin (Coniah)
  
11. The prophecies in chapter 23 are directed against the prophets and priests. List the wrongs the prophets and priests did (or did not do) which brought the Lord's anger against them.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. As the time of Jerusalem's destruction nears, Jeremiah foretells how long the captivity will last. The first indication of length is given in 22:10. What time length is implied by this statement?

**JEREMIAH 24 - 29**

This section of the book primarily concerns the nature of the Babylonian captivity.

1. The Lord conveys his message to Jeremiah by showing him two baskets of figs (Jeremiah 24).
  - a. When does the Lord give this message?
  - b. One basket had good figs; the other basket had bad figs. What truth did this difference symbolize?
  - c. What would be the outcome of those taken into captivity?

Of those remaining in the land under Zedekiah?

2. Chapter 25 summarizes the essence of Jeremiah's message spoken up to this time.
  - a. What are the three time references given for this prophecy?
    - 1)
    - 2)
    - 3)Therefore, what year is this?
  - b. Is Jeremiah the only prophet God has sent to Judah during this time period? (25:4f)
  - c. For the first time in the book, Jeremiah gives a clear indication of how long the captivity will last. How long will the captivity be?

So, what are the dates for the beginning and ending of the captivity? [Be careful; consult a Bible dictionary. Must we understand that the captivity will last *exactly* 70 years?]

3. Chapter 26 records events "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim."
  - a. Jeremiah repeats (?) the prophecy that Jerusalem will be like Shiloh (cf. 7:12). Who reacts to this prophecy and what do they do?
  - b. Who defends Jeremiah and what argument do they use in his defense?
  - c. However, which prophet is not as fortunate as Jeremiah?
4. Chapter 27 reverts back to the reign of Zedekiah. The Lord asks Jeremiah to make yokes which are to be sent to the surrounding nations.
  - a. What do the yokes symbolize?
  - b. What choice does God set before his people?
  - c. Who was apparently influencing Zedekiah not to heed the words of Jeremiah? (27:9ff)
5. Chapter 28 informs us of one particular false prophet, Hananiah.
  - a. In particular, what false teaching did Hananiah give? (28:2-3)
  - b. As a result, what was Hananiah's fate?
6. Chapter 29 records a letter that Jeremiah sends to the captives in Babylon.
  - a. What instructions are given to the captives by Jeremiah?
  - b. Why was this letter needed?

**JEREMIAH 30 - 33**

The prophecies within this section of the book concentrate on the time when the Lord brings the captives back from captivity and restores them as his people. The key phrase is "Behold, the days are coming..." (30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14).

1. In describing the nature of his relationship with the captives who will return, the Lord says on several occasions that "You shall be My people, and I will be your God." (24:7; 30:22; 31:1, 33; 32:38). Consider the context of each of these occurrences and then explain what this expression means.
  
2. Jeremiah 31:31-34 foretells of a *new covenant* that God will make with his people.
  - a. List the characteristics of this new covenant.
  
  - b. What was the problem with the former covenant?
  
3. Chapter 32 finds Jeremiah in the court of the prison.
  - a. Why was he there?
  
  - b. While in prison, Jeremiah is brought an offer by his cousin, Hanameel, to buy property in Anathoth. Apparently, the property had belong to one of Jeremiah's relative who was now dead and Jeremiah had the "first right of refusal". Does Jeremiah buy the property?
  
  - c. Is this not inconsistent with his message of upcoming disaster? Why, or why not?
  
  - d. Did Jeremiah readily understand the lesson God was teaching?

- e. God explains his purpose. List the things identified in 32:36-44 that God has planned for his people.
  
- f. As an aside, note the following:
  - 1) Consider the procedure used in purchasing property. Is it much different than ours? Why were there two deeds?
  
  - 2) Consider how Jeremiah addresses God in his prayer, even though Jeremiah does not understand the purposes of God.
  
- 4. In chapter 33, the Lord reveals himself to Jeremiah while in prison a second time. His message again centers on the future time when God returns the captives.
  - a. In verses 15-26, what are the two promises that the Lord gives to illustrate his future blessings?
    - 1)
  
    - 2)
  
  - b. What does the Lord use to demonstrate the *certainty* of his promises?



**JEREMIAH 34 - 39**

1. Chapter 34 is set in the time of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.
  - a. How successful had Nebuchadnezzar been up to this point in his campaign against Judah?
  - b. What had the men of Judah done which pleased the Lord?
  - c. But, what did they then do which displeased God?
  
2. Among those who fled to Jerusalem for protection were the Rechabites, a clan named after Rechab.
  - a. When did Rechab live? (cf. 2 Samuel 4:2; 2 Kings 10:15; 1 Chronicles 2:55)
  - b. What did the Lord tell Jeremiah to offer the Rechabites?
  - c. Why would they not drink the wine they were offered?
  - d. So, how many years (approximately) had they kept the command of Jonadab, the son of Rechab?
  - e. What blessing would the Rechabites receive for keeping Jonadab's command?
  - f. What is the lesson of the Rechabites?
  
3. The Lord instructs Jeremiah to write his prophecies in a scroll (chapter 36).
  - a. Specifically, what was the scroll to contain? (36:2)
  - b. What was the Lord's purpose in having the scroll written?
  - c. Who was Jeremiah's scribe?
  - d. Where and when did Baruch read the contents of the scroll?  
  
What event coincided with his reading? (36:6,9)

- e. Outline the sequence how the contents of the scroll were ultimately reported to the king.
  - f. What was the king's reaction to hearing the scroll read?
  - g. What was to be Jehoiakim's punishment for his burning of the scroll?
4. Chapter 37 tells of a time when Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem, but because the Egyptians arrive, the Babylonians break off the siege and flee.
- a. What conclusion would the people of Judah jump to concerning the Babylonians?
  - b. But, what was Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the Babylonians?
5. During the break in the siege, Jeremiah leaves Jerusalem "to claim his property" in Benjamin.
- a. What does the captain of the guard accuse Jeremiah of doing?
  - b. What punishment do the princes of the city want to give Jeremiah? (38:1-5)
  - c. What is Jeremiah's advice to Zedekiah? (38:14-20)
  - d. This series of episodes involving Jeremiah's imprisonment gives a good look at Zedekiah. How would you evaluate his character?
  - e. How long is Jeremiah in prison?
6. The account of the fall of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 39:1-10 parallels to a great extent 2 Kings 25:1-12. However, note what the following verses in each chapter emphasize.
- a. What aspects of the fall does 2 Kings 25:13-21 emphasize?
  - b. What does Jeremiah 39:11ff emphasize?

**JEREMIAH 40-45**

1. Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard, released Jeremiah from prison as instructed by Nebuchadnezzar (39:11ff).
  - a. What truth did Nebuzaradan understand that the people in Judah had not?
  - b. What choice did Nebuzaradan give to Jeremiah?
  - c. Which did Jeremiah choose?
  
2. Nebuzaradan appointed Gedaliah governor of Judah to rule those who remained in the land (2 Kings 25:22ff; Jeremiah 40:5).
  - a. Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan (40:5). What service had Ahikam provided Jeremiah previously? (26:24)

And who, presumably, was Shaphan? (2 Kings 22:3ff)

- b. In general, was Gedaliah well received as governor of the land?
- c. What instruction did Gedaliah give to the people? (40:9-10)
- d. However, who did Ishmael, a captain of one of the armies, conspire with to kill Gedaliah?

What possible motivation did Ishmael have? (cf. 2 Kings 25:25)

- e. So, how long did Gedaliah serve as governor?

3. After Gedaliah's assassination, the record in 2 Kings 25:26 simply says "And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans." Jeremiah's account fills in many of the events that led to this exodus.
  - a. The people had good reason to be afraid since the Babylonian appointee had been assassinated. So to whom did the people go for advice? Is there any evidence of insincerity in their seeking of advice?
  - b. What does the Lord through Jeremiah command the people to do?
  - c. Was the Lord's command obeyed?
  - d. Therefore, what punishment did the Lord plan for his people again?
  - e. The people make an interesting argument to justify their decision (44:15-18). Summarize their argument.

What historical basis, if any, could they have made for their position?

4. Jeremiah 45 chronologically follows Jeremiah 36. What is the single point of this short chapter?

### **THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS**

The book itself does not identify its author, but Jewish tradition accords Jeremiah as the author.

1. How many verses does each of the five chapters contain?

[The reason for this is that each chapter is a complete poem and the first four poems (chapters) are acrostics. That is, each stanza (verse) of these poems begins with a different consonant of the Hebrew alphabet (which has 22 consonants). The third poem is even more elaborate because each of the three lines within each stanza also starts with the same consonant. Although the fifth poem is not an acrostic, it still consists of 22 lines.]

2. Read the book and make note of anything that "catches your eye."

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