

## Background of Jeremiah:

*(From Zondervan's Study Bible Notes)*

Jeremiah began prophesying in Judah halfway through the reign of Josiah (640-609 b.c.) and continued throughout the reigns of Jehoahaz (609), Jehoiakim (609-598), Jehoiachin (598-597) and Zedekiah (597-586). It was a period of storm and stress when the doom of entire nations -- including Judah itself -- was being sealed. The smaller states of western Asia were often pawns in the power plays of such imperial giants as Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, and the time of Jeremiah's ministry was no exception. Ashurbanipal, last of the great Assyrian rulers, died in 627. His successors were no match for Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian empire, who began his rule in 626 (the year of Jeremiah's call to prophesy). Soon after Assyria's capital city Nineveh fell under the onslaught of a coalition of Babylonians and Medes in 612, Egypt (no friend of Babylon) marched northward in an attempt to rescue Assyria, which would soon be destroyed. King Josiah of Judah made the mistake of trying to stop the Egyptian advance, and his untimely death near Megiddo in 609 at the hands of Pharaoh Neco II was the sad result (2Ch 35:20-24). Jeremiah, who had found a kindred spirit in the godly Josiah and perhaps had proclaimed the messages recorded in 11:1-8; 17:19-27 during the king's reformation movement, lamented Josiah's death (see 2Ch 35:25 and note).

Josiah's son Jehoahaz, also known as Shallum, is mentioned only briefly in the book of Jeremiah (22:10b-12), and then in an unfavorable way. Neco put Jehoahaz in chains and made Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, king in his place, renaming him Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz had ruled for a scant three months (2Ch 36:2), and his reign marks the turning point in the king's attitude toward Jeremiah. Once the friend and confidant of the king, the prophet now entered a dreary round of persecution and imprisonment, alternating with only brief periods of freedom (20:1-2; 26:8-9; 32:2-3; 33:1; 36:26; 37:12-21; 38:6-13,28).

Jehoiakim remained relentlessly hostile toward Jeremiah. On one occasion, when an early draft of the prophet's writings was being read to Jehoiakim (36:21), the king used a scribe's knife to cut the scroll apart, three or four columns at a time, and threw it piece by piece into the firepot in his winter apartment (vv. 22-23). At the Lord's command, however, Jeremiah simply dictated his prophecies to Baruch a second time, adding "many similar words" to them (v. 32).

Just prior to this episode in Jeremiah's life, an event of extraordinary importance took place that changed the course of history: In 605 b.c., the Egyptians were crushed at Carchemish on the Euphrates by Nebuchadnezzar (46:2), the gifted general who succeeded his father Nabopolassar as ruler of Babylon that same year. Neco returned to Egypt after heavy losses, and Babylon was given a virtually free hand in western Asia for the next 70 years. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 605, humiliating Jehoiakim (Da 1:1-2) and carrying off Daniel and his three companions to Babylon (Da 1:3-6). Later, in 598-597, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem again, and the rebellious Jehoiakim was heard of no more. His son Jehoiachin ruled Judah for only three months

(2Ch 36:9). Jeremiah foretold the captivity of Jehoiachin and his followers (22:24-30), a prediction that was later fulfilled (24:1; 29:1-2).

Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle and a son of Josiah, was renamed Zedekiah and placed on Judah's throne by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 b.c. (37:1; 2Ch 36:9-14). Zedekiah, a weak and vacillating ruler, sometimes befriended Jeremiah and sought his advice but at other times allowed the prophet's enemies to mistreat and imprison him. Near the end of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah entered into an agreement with him to reveal God's will to him in exchange for his own personal safety (38:14-27). Even then the prophet was under virtual house arrest until Jerusalem was captured in 586 (38:28).

While trying to flee the city, Zedekiah was overtaken by the pursuing Babylonians. In his presence his sons were executed, after which he himself was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar (39:1-7). Nebuzaradan, commander of the imperial guard, advised Jeremiah to live with Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had made governor over Judah (40:1-6). After a brief term of office, Gedaliah was murdered by his opponents (41:1-9). Others in Judah feared Babylonian reprisal and fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them (43:4-7). By that time the prophet was probably over 70 years old. His last recorded words are found in 44:24-30, the last verse of which is the only explicit reference in the Bible to Pharaoh Hophra, who ruled Egypt from 589 to 570 b.c.

## Old Testament Survey

### The Book of Jeremiah

- Author: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Called to prophesy around \_\_\_\_\_ years of age
  - Served God as a prophet for over \_\_\_\_\_ years
  - Called the “\_\_\_\_\_ prophet”
  - Commanded not to \_\_\_\_\_ and raise children because the impending divine judgment on Judah would sweep away the next generation (16:1-4)
  - Jeremiah's closest companion was his faithful secretary, \_\_\_\_\_, who wrote down Jeremiah's words as the prophet dictated them (36:4-32)
  - Jewish tradition asserts that while living in Egypt he was put to death by being \_\_\_\_\_
- Time frame: King Josiah to \_\_\_\_\_ (1:1-3)
- Key Verse: Jeremiah 1:10 *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*
- Themes:
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord
  - Judgment
  - Humanity
    - \_\_\_\_\_ insight of the prophet
    - Insight into the heart of Israel
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Rebellion
  - Grace
  - \_\_\_\_\_

- Outline of Jeremiah
  - \_\_\_\_\_ of the Prophet (ch. 1)
  - Warnings and Exhortations to \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. 2 - 35)
    - \_\_\_\_\_ against Israel (chs. 2-6)
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Message (chs. 7-10)
    - The \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant (chs. 11-12)
    - Illustration of the \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 13)
    - Messages concerning the \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. 14-15)
    - Sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ Prophet (16:1;17:18)
    - Command to Keep the \_\_\_\_\_ Holy (17:19-27)
    - Lessons from the \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. 18-20)
      - Illustration of the Potter (ch 18)
      - Illustration of the Broken \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 19)
      - Prophecy of the Valley of \_\_\_\_\_ (19:6-9)
      - Persecution of Jeremiah (ch 20)
    - Prophecy against the Kings of Judah (chs. 21-22)
      - Prophecy against Jeconiah's \_\_\_\_\_ (22:24-30; Matthew 1; Luke 3)
    - Woe to the \_\_\_\_\_ and False \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 23)
      - The Righteous \_\_\_\_\_ (23:4-6)
      - God's \_\_\_\_\_ vs Man's words (23:16, 22,25,29)
    - Sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 24)
    - Foretelling the \_\_\_\_\_-year Babylonian Exile (ch 25)
      - Sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ Cup of Fury (25:15-38)
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Message in the \_\_\_\_\_ Court (ch 26)
    - Sign of the \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 27-28)
      - \_\_\_\_\_ Prophecy of Hananiah (ch 28)

- \_\_\_\_\_ to the Captives in Babylon (ch 29)
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Prophecy of Restoration (chs. 30-33)
  - The Day of \_\_\_\_\_ (30:7)
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant (31:31-34)
  - Prophecy against Zedekiah (32:4-5)
    - Conflicting prophecy? (Ezekiel 12:13)
  - The Sign of the Purchased \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 32)
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ of Righteousness (33:14-26)
- Message to Zedekiah concerning his \_\_\_\_\_ (ch 34)
- Dealings with the Rechabites (ch 35)
- Sufferings and Persecutions of the Prophet (chs. 36-38)
  - Burning Jeremiah's \_\_\_\_\_ (ch. 36)
  - Imprisoning Jeremiah (chs. 37-38)
    - Warning to Zedekiah (38:17-18)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem and Its Aftermath (chs. 39-45)
  - The Fall Itself (ch. 39)
  - Accession and Assassination of Gedaliah (40:1;41:15)
  - Migration to \_\_\_\_\_ (41:16;43:13)
  - Prophecy \_\_\_\_\_ Those in Egypt (ch. 44)
  - Promise to Baruch (ch. 45)
- Judgment against the \_\_\_\_\_ (chs. 46-51)
  - Against Egypt (ch. 46)
  - Against Philistia (ch. 47)
  - Against Moab (ch. 48)
  - Against Ammon (49:1-6)
  - Against Edom (49:7-22)
  - Against Damascus (49:23-27)

- Against Kedar and Hazor (Arabia) (49:28-33)
- Against Elam (49:34-39)
- Against Babylon (chs. 50-51)
  - Foreshadowing of the events of Revelation 17-18
- Historical Appendix (ch. 52)

## **The Book of Lamentations**

- Written by \_\_\_\_\_
- After the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem
- 5 Lamentations
- Themes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ over Israel
  - \_\_\_\_\_ in Judgment (3:21-31)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ of God (5:19)