

OT-OV

Lesson 113

1. Last week I finished our overview of the book of Isaiah. When time expired we were about to begin a review of the book of Jeremiah. Before we begin our study I think we should step back a look at the big picture.

HELPFUL CHRONOLOGIES

625 B.C.	Babylonia established as power by Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, an Assyrian
612 B.C.	Babylon (under Nebuchadnezzar) defeats Egypt and Assyria at Carchemish
606 B.C.	Judah is defeated by Babylon, two major deportations follow in 597 and 586 when the Temple and city are destroyed
539 B.C.	Cyrus conquers Babylon (the end of the Babylonian Empire)
538 B.C.	Edict of Cyrus the Great permits Jewish repatriation of Judah
536 B.C.	Return of 49,897 Jews to the land, book of Daniel written Daniel dies soon thereafter
334 B.C.	Alexander begins his conquest of Persia
323 B.C.	Alexander's conquest is complete-Alexander dies
323-147 B.C.	Hellenistic Empires (Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus)
200 B.C.-476	Roman Empire
Tribulation	Revived Roman Empire established

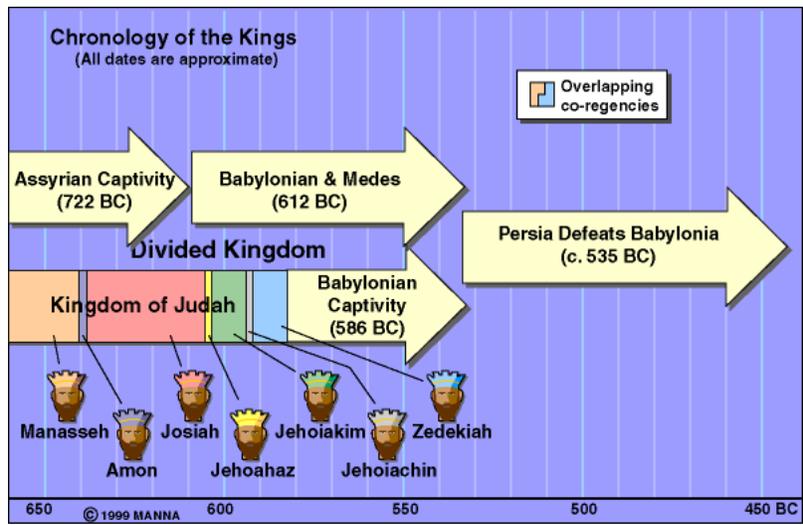
2. Jeremiah was written from either Judah or Egypt in about 580 by the prophet himself. The prophet rebukes Judah urging their return to the Lord. He also urges no reliance on the power of alliances, particularly Egypt, predicting the victory of Babylon. He also prophesied of Judah's exile to Babylonia and their return after 70 years. He is active during the reigns of the last four Kings of Judah.

3. The best way to overview the book of Jeremiah is to study the Doctrine of Jeremiah.

The Doctrine of Jeremiah

1. Jeremiah was written from either Judah or Egypt in about 580 B.C. by the prophet himself. The prophet rebukes Judah urging their return to the Lord. He also urges no reliance on the power of alliances, particularly Egypt, predicting the victory of Babylon. He also prophesied of Judah's exile to Babylonia and their return after 70 years. He is active during the reigns of the last four Kings of Judah.

2. Let's take a look at the chronology of the kings of Judah beginning with Manasseh to Zedekiah. All of these kings in some way are involved with Jeremiah and the terrible end of Judah.



3. Jeremiah was a major prophet during the period of the decline and fall of Judah in the 7th and 6th century B.C. He prophesied in Judah during the period c. 625 to 582.

4. The latter part of the 7th century produced four prophets in Judah: Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk. The greatest of these, and the one enjoying the longest period of prophetic activity was Jeremiah.

5. His birth place was Anathoth, a little village perched on a limestone ridge two miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jeremiah was born in c. 650 during the closing period of King Manasseh's reign.

6. The Northern Kingdom had earlier fallen in c. 721 to the Assyrians. Later the southern kingdom would fall in three principle dispersions: 606, 597 and 586.

7. Before Jeremiah's birth Egypt and Israel had formed a coalition to defeat the Assyrians; so war clouds were on the world's horizon.

8. This international turmoil could be responsible for the prophet's name. His name means "whom the lord (Yahweh) establishes;" or, "whom the Lord (Yahweh) hurls" or "casts forth."

9. His prophecies were replete with predictions of divine judgment for Judah.

Jer 1:13 The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?" "I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered.

Jer 1:14 The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land.

Jer 1:15 I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD. "Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah.

Jer 1:16 I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made.

Jer 1:17 "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them.

Jer 1:18 Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land.

Jer 1:19 They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

10. Indeed, he was a spiritual missile hurled forth in a darkened world. Hilkiyah was his father's name (Jer 1:1) - a common Hebrew name meaning "the Lord (Yahweh) is my portion."

Jer 1:1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.

11. Both names (Jeremiah's and Hilkiyah's) suggest that his family was loyal to the God of Israel during the tyrannical reign of the ungodly King Manasseh.

12. Jeremiah had a background of the finest religious traditions and grew up in the atmosphere of a pious Jew; strict Judaism was part of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual inheritance.

13. When Jeremiah began to prophesy, he demonstrated a firsthand awareness of divine knowledge and his divine call. Like all great prophets, Jeremiah shook himself free of all secondary and human sources of inspiration.

14. Jeremiah, unlike the "successful" preachers today was not accepted by the people of the southern kingdom or their leaders. He taught and there were few who came to listen.

15. In fact when he taught, the prophet encountered great opposition but he would not keep quiet. He knew in his heart that God had called him, for he had heard the voice of the Lord: "Before I fashioned you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I dedicated you; I designed you for a prophet to the nations."

Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

16. Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah was located in the territory of Benjamin. Benjamin was from the tribe of King Saul and “the bad boy Shimei.” Benjamin was also known for their military prowess along with their neighbor Ephraim.

17. Since Jerusalem was less than an hour's walk from Anathoth Jeremiah was in close touch with the heart of the nation and the pulse of the world.

18. All the political and social news would trickle eventually to the prophet's village. He was no doubt aware of the reverberations of the Assyrian, Scythian, and Babylonian campaigns.

19. Every day events made an indelible imprint on his life. He observed the farmer in the field (Jer 4:3), the children in the street (Jer 6:11), the silver refiners and the potters at their work (Jer 6:28-30 and Jer 18:3-6).

Jer 4:3 This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.

Jer 6:11 But I am full of the wrath of the LORD, and I cannot hold it in. "Pour it out on the children in the street and on the young men gathered together; both husband and wife will be caught in it, and the old, those weighed down with years.

Jer 6:28 They are all hardened rebels, going about to slander. They are bronze and iron; they all act corruptly ...

Jer 6:30 They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

Jer 18:3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel ...

Jer 18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

20. Manasseh died when Jeremiah was about ten years old. Amon, Manasseh's son, ruled two years. After Amon a young King Josiah (c. 640-609) ascended the Judean throne at only eight years of age.

21. Several years later during Josiah's reign, Jeremiah was drafted by the Lord to be a prophet to the nations.

Jer 1:2 The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah,

22. The years 627 and 626 B.C. were most significant years in world history. Ashurbanipal, the last great Assyrian king, died; and Nabopolassar, the first great Neo-Babylonian king, came to the throne of Babylon.

23. Some ten years later the Babylonians and Medes, along with the Scythians, launched a combined attack on Nineveh the capital of Assyria. The death rattle could already be detected in the throat of Assyria, the mistress of the world.

24. During this shaking of the nations, God's hand laid hold on Jeremiah, and overpowered him. Behind that call were inheritance, tradition, and training; but the experience itself was sudden, abrupt, and fraught with terrific weight and meaning.

25. From that day, Jeremiah moved upon the stage of history as a God-possessed soul. Jeremiah's prophetic ministry began in Anathoth, and apparently he remained there for several years as more or less an insignificant prophet. In 622-621 a religious reformation occurred. Josiah had taken over the reigns of government and decided to restore faith in the God of Israel.

26. At this point a brief history lesson of the last six kings of the southern kingdom will prove helpful.

JOSIAH (c. 640-608)

1. Josiah, a good king of Judah, was the grandson of Manasseh and son and successor of Amon.

1.1 The primary biblical information concerning him comes from 2Ki 22-23; 2Ch 34 and 35; and the book of Zephaniah. His birth was supernaturally predicted by name during the reign of Jeroboam. 1Ki 12:31-32

1Ki 13:1 By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering.

1Ki 13:2 He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'"

1.1.1 Josiah was instrumental in eradicating idolatry in Judah and the southern part of Israel.



1.2 He was one of the good kings of Judah who led a reform. The "people of the land" placed him on the throne, and he reigned c. 640-608. In the eighth year of his reign he "began to seek after the God of David." (2Ch 34:3)

2Ch 34:3 In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images.

2Ch 34:4 Under his direction the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles, the idols and the images. These he broke to pieces and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

1.3 In his twelfth year he began his reforms in Judah and Jerusalem, and in parts of northern Israel as well. (Jeremiah received his call to the prophetic ministry in Josiah's thirteenth year, (c. 626 B.C.) In his eighteenth year (c. 622) Josiah arranged for the Temple to be repaired.

2. It was at this time that a most important event in his reign occurred. Hilkiah the high priest found the "book of the law" in the temple. If this work is not to be identified solely as the book of Deuteronomy, it is quite certain that it at least included that book, or parts of it. This law book was responsible for the renewal of the covenant and further reforms.

2.1 Josiah centralized public worship in Jerusalem. He also observed the Passover on the grandest scale since the days of the judges. But in spite of all this, Jeremiah makes it clear that Josiah's reform was only superficial, external, and temporary. No genuine repentance or lasting inner change of the people resulted from it. Jer 5:1-19; 6:14-30

Jer 5:1 "Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.

Jer 5:2 Although they say, 'As surely as the LORD lives,' still they are swearing falsely."

Jer 5:5 So I will go to the leaders and speak to them; surely they know the way of the LORD, the requirements of their God." But with one accord they too had broken off the yoke and torn off the bonds.

Jer 5:6 Therefore a lion from the forest will attack them, a wolf from the desert will ravage them, a leopard will lie in wait near their towns to tear to pieces any who venture out, for their rebellion is great and their backslidings many.

Jer 5:7 "Why should I forgive you? Your children have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes.

Jer 5:8 They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife.

Jer 5:9 Should I not punish them for this?" declares the LORD. "Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this? ...

Jer 5:12 They have lied about the LORD; they said, "He will do nothing! No harm will come to us; we will never see sword or famine.

Jer 5:13 The prophets are but wind and the word is not in them; so let what they say be done to them."

Jer 5:14 Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says: "Because the people have spoken these words, I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes ...

Jer 5:18 "Yet even in those days," declares the LORD, "I will not destroy you completely.

Jer 5:19 And when the people ask, 'Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?' you will tell them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own.'

Jer 6:14 They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

Jer 6:15 Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them," says the LORD ...

Jer 6:21 Therefore this is what the LORD says: "I will put obstacles before this people. Fathers and sons alike will stumble over them; neighbors and friends will perish."

Jer 6:22 This is what the LORD says: "Look, an army is coming from the land of the north; a great nation is being stirred up from the ends of the earth.

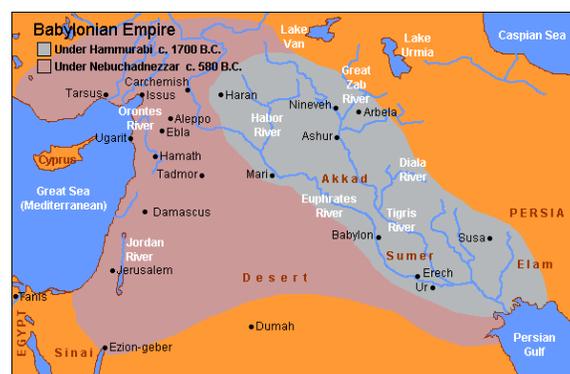
Jer 6:28 They are all hardened rebels, going about to slander. They are bronze and iron; they all act corruptly ...

Jer 6:29 The bellows blow fiercely to burn away the lead with fire, but the refining goes on in vain; the wicked are not purged out.

Jer 6:30 They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

3. Josiah adopted an anti-Assyrian and anti-Egyptian policy. Most of these policies were advocated by Jeremiah. Josiah met an untimely death in c. 610 by leading a little army against Neco II, king of Egypt.

3.1 Neco II was actually on a march with his army to aid the Assyrians in making their last ditch stand against the Babylonians at Haran. At the very beginning of this encounter with the Egyptian army at Megiddo, Josiah was killed.



3.1.1 His religious reformation was soon forgotten and three months later the kingdom of Judah lost its political independence to Egypt.

4. Josiah was the last good and Godly king of Judah before the Babylonian captivity. The finest tribute is paid to him in 2Ki 23:25.

"And like unto him was there no king before him ... he turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

JEHOAHAZ (c. 608)

1. Jehoahas was a king of Judah and son of Josiah. Although he was not the eldest, he was chosen by the people. (2Ki 23:30-31)

2Ki 23:30 Josiah's servants brought his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

2Ki 23:31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah.

2. He ruled under the tragic circumstances of the death of Josiah. After only three months he was deposed by Pharaoh-Necho and taken to Egypt in chains.

2Ki 23:33 Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath so that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and he imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

Jer 22:10 Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again.

Jer 22:11 For this is what the LORD says about Shallum (Jehoahaz) son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but has gone from this place: "He will never return.

Jer 22:12 He will die in the place where they have led him captive; he will not see this land again."

Jer 22:13 "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

3. The people mourned his death. He was the first king of Judah to die in exile.

JEHOIAKIM (c. 608-597)

1. Jehoiakim was a king of Judah and a son of Josiah by his wife Zebudah. He was first called Eliakim, but after deposing Jehoahaz, Pharaoh-Necho set him on the throne of Judah and changed his name to Jehoiakim, in the latter half of c. 609.

2Ki 23:34 Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, and there he died.

2Ki 23:35 Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh Necho the silver and gold he demanded. In order to do so, he taxed the land and exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land according to their assessments.

2Ki 23:36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Zebudah daughter of Pedaiiah; she was from Rumah.

2Ki 23:37 And he did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his fathers had done.

2. He was subject to Egypt for four years and required to exact heavy tribute from his people. The battle of Carchemish in 605 ended the rule of Egypt.

3. Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem and received the submission of Jehoiakim and took some 60 captives including Daniel and his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo) and the golden vessels from the temple of Babylon.

2Ki 24:1 During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

4. Nebuchadnezzar had Jehoiakim, and many others, exiled in chains to Babylon (2Ch 36:6), but evidently released him after receiving assurance that he would be a loyal vassal.

2Ch 36:6 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

2Ch 36:7 Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of the LORD and put them in his temple there.

5. Judah began a period of moral and religious decay. Baal and Ashtoreth were worshiped in the gates of the temple and sacrifices resumed in the valley of Hinnom.

6. Cruelty, corruption and oppression were commonplace in the city. Jeremiah wrote on a scroll in protest, telling how divine judgment would surely come to Judah (Jer 36), but the king, after reading a few leaves, took his knife and cut them in strips and then burned them.

Jer 36:1 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

Jer 36:2 "Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now.

Jer 36:3 Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, each of them will turn from his wicked way; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin.

Jer 36:4 So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll...

Jer 36:23 Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the fire pot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire.

Jer 36:24 The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes.

Jer 36:25 Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them.

Jer 36:26 Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them.

7. After three years Jehoiakim rashly rebelled against Babylonia however Nebuchadnezzar was too busy with battles elsewhere to address the matters in Judah. Jehoiakim died on Dec. 10, 598 B.C. according to calculations based on a Babylonian chronicle.

8. The people did not mourn his death. He was given a shameful burial as Jeremiah had prophesied.

Jer 22:18 Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: "They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!' They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!'"

Jer 22:19 He will have the burial of a donkey-- dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem."

9. His young son Jehoiachin inherited his throne and all the unsolved problems.