

OT-OV

Lesson 114

1. Last week I began an overview of the book of Jeremiah. We need to do a little review and then pick up with new material on page three.

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. As we saw last week the best way to overview the book of Jeremiah is to study Jeremiah.

Doctrine of Jeremiah

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

2. His birth place was Anathoth, a little village located two miles NE of Jerusalem. Jeremiah was born in c. 650 during the closing period of King Manasseh's reign.

3. His prophecies were replete with predictions of divine judgment for Judah (Jer 1:13-19). Indeed, he was a spiritual missile, hurled forth in a darkened world.

4. Yet 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.

5. 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. All the political and social news would trickle eventually to the prophet's village and the reverberations of the Assyrian, Scythian, and Babylonian campaigns.

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

JOSIAH (c. 640-608)

1. Josiah was a good king. He was the grandson of Manasseh and son of Amon. The primary biblical information concerning him comes from 2Ki 22-23; 2Ch 34-35, Jeremiah (many references) and Zephaniah.

1.1 His birth was supernaturally predicted by name in the time of Jeroboam. 1Ki 12:31-13:2

2. He was one of the good kings of Judah who led badly needed reforms. 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, his father" (2Ch 34:3).

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

4. 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.

5. 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

6. Josiah met an untimely death in c. 610 by leading a little army against Neco II, king of Egypt. 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.

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

JEHOAHAZ (c. 608)

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

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.

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

JEHOIAKIM (608-597)

1. King of Judah, 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 609. 2Ki 23:34-37

2. He was subject to Egypt for four years and required to heavy tribute from his people. The battle of Carchemish in May-June 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 and the golden vessels from the temple of Babylon. 2Ki 24:1

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

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, but the king, after reading a few leaves, took his knife and cut them in strips and then burned them. Jer 36:1-26

7. After three years Jehoiakim rashly rebelled against Babylonia and in c. 597 the city was again attacked and the king killed. It was in 597 that Ezekiel was taken hostage and removed to Babylon.

8. The people did not mourn Jehoiakim; he was given a shameful burial as Jeremiah had prophesied. Jer 22:18-19

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

JEHOIACHIN (c. 597)

1. He is also called Jeconiah and Coniah in several places in the Old Testament and in the New Testament he is called in the Greek Jechonias.

1Ch 3:17 And the sons of Jeconiah; Assir, Salathiel his son,

Est 2:5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

Est 2:6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

1.1 In Jer 22:24-30 there is a remarkable and special prophecy for this wicked king.

1.1.1 There it is predicted that none of his seed would be in the line of Christ though he was a son of David.

1.1.2 Though Joseph the stepfather of Jesus did come from the line of Jeconiah or Coniah, the virgin conception rules out his participation.

1.1.3 Recall Mary came by way of Nathan and not Solomon; her genealogy can be found in Luk 3:23-38.

Jer 22:24 As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

Jer 22:25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Jer 22:26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

Jer 22:27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

Jer 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

Jer 22:29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

Jer 22:30 Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

1.1.4 There is the mention of Coniah as Jechonias in the line of Joseph to Christ in the Book of Matthew 1:11-12

Mat 1:11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

Mat 1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

2. Coniah's reign lasted three months and ten days (2Ki 24:8). He ascended to the throne when Judah was suffering from raids by neighboring people (particularly the Edomites) the raids were incited by Nebuchadnezzar because of Jehoiakim's reckless bid for independence.

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.

2Ki 24:2 The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets.

2Ki 24:3 Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD'S command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done,

2Ki 24:4 including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive.

2Ki 24:5 As for the other events of Jehoiakim's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

2Ki 24:6 Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king ...

2Ki 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

3. Jehoiachin's short rule gave little chance to tell what sort of king he would have made, but he is charged with doing evil as his father had done.

2Ki 24:9 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father had done.

4. When Nebuchadnezzar finished his war with Egypt, he mobilized his army to invade Judah, and Jehoiachin was forced to capitulate.

4.1 A cuneiform tablet in the series of the court chronicles of the Babylonian kings states the exact date that Nebuchadnezzar took him captive, equivalent to March 16, 597

5. On April 22, c. 597 he left Jerusalem to begin his exile in Babylon, along with 10,000 others including his mother, the leading men and women of Judah such as Ezekiel the prophet. Judah's treasures were also taken at this time.

6. There was only a poor and feeble remnant left behind, with no leadership or protection.

2Ki 24:10 At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it,

2Ki 24:11 and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it.

2Ki 24:12 Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner.

2Ki 24:13 As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD.

2Ki 24:14 He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans--a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

2Ki 24:15 Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land.

2Ki 24:16 The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans.
 2Ki 24:17 He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

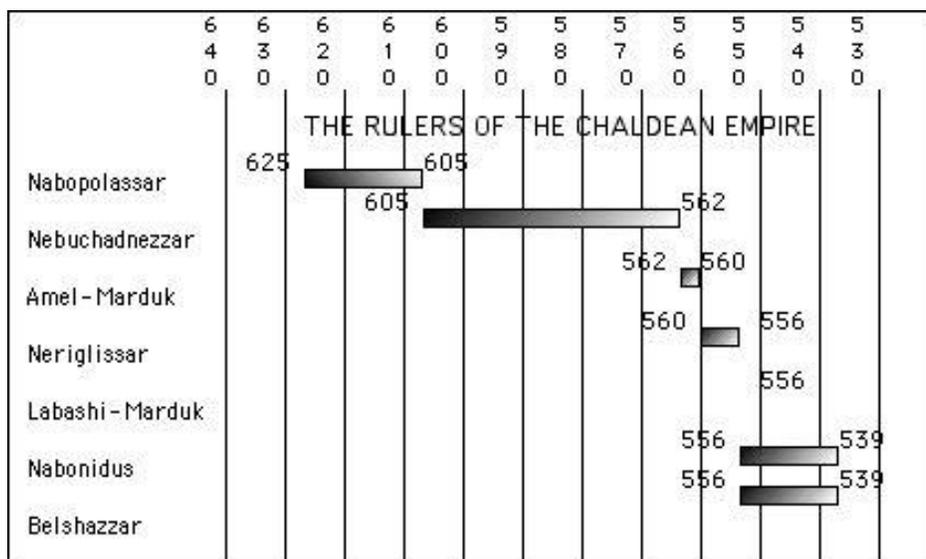
7. Jehoiachin was held captive for the rest of his life.

7.1 At least two Babylonian tablets dated with a date of 592 list Jehoiachin and his five sons among those who received rations from the king in Babylon.

8. He seems to have enjoyed a certain amount of freedom within the city at this time, but was imprisoned later, perhaps during the final siege of Jerusalem.

8.1 After about 36 years Evil-merodach, King of Babylon set him free from prison but made him eat at his table.

8.1.1 Let's me give you a listing of the Chaldean kings.



9. Jehoiachin remained a figure of nationalistic hope to his people during his long captivity, for he was the legitimate Davidic king and was even called "king of Judah." As long as he lived he kept the nationalistic spirit of his people on fire.

ZEDEKIAH (c. 597-586)

1. Zedekiah was the last king of Judah (597-586). The account of his 11-year reign is found in 2Ki 24; 2Ch 36; Jer 39 and 52.

1.1 Twenty-one years of age when he became king, Zedekiah was the third son of Josiah to come to the throne.

1.2 He was the younger brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim and the uncle of Jehoiachin.

1.3 The removal of Jehoiachin to exile included the deportation of the chief men of Judah.

1.4 Zedekiah was made king over the remnant left behind in 597, and his previous name, Mattaniah, was changed to Zedekiah (2Ki 24:17).

1.5 The situation he inherited was a tenuous one and in fact too difficult for Zedekiah to control.

2. At the outset of his reign Zedekiah gave some signs of intention to obey the Mosaic law and to heed the advice of Jeremiah with respect to foreign policies.

3. He urged those who held slaves to set them free (Jer 34), and sent an embassy to Babylon to advise the Jews there to settle down to normal living and seek the peace of the city and to pray for peace (Jer 29).

Jer 34:8 The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves.

Jer 34:9 Everyone was to free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female; no one was to hold a fellow Jew in bondage.

Jer 34:10 So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free.

Jer 34:11 But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again.

Jer 34:12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah:

Jer 34:13 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your forefathers when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said,

Jer 34:14 'Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrew who has sold himself to you. After he has served you six years, you must let him go free.' Your fathers, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me.

Jer 34:15 Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to his countrymen. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name ...

Jer 34:17 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom for your fellow countrymen. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the LORD--'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Jer 29:1 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon ...

Jer 29:4 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Jer 29:5 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

Jer 29:6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

Jer 29:7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

4. It soon became apparent, however, that the court of Zedekiah was a center of intrigue and plotting against Babylon.

5. In the fourth year of Zedekiah, ambassadors gathered at Jerusalem from the surrounding nations of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon urging the king of Judah to join them in a conspiracy against Babylon.

6. Jeremiah opposed this foolish scheme and appeared before the envoys bearing upon his shoulders a yoke of wood to dramatize his declaration that God had given the nations into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

6.1 Those who submitted would be allowed to live but those who rebelled and refused submission to the yoke would perish declared the prophet (Jer 27).

Jer 27:1 Early in the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

Jer 27:2 This is what the LORD said to me: "Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck.

Jer 27:3 Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah.

Jer 27:4 Give them a message for their masters and say, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Tell this to your masters:

Jer 27:5 With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please.

Jer 27:6 Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him.

Jer 27:7 All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.

Jer 27:8 "If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague, declares the LORD, until I destroy it by his hand.

6.2 News of the impending revolt may have reached Nebuchadnezzar, who apparently then summoned Zedekiah to Babylon (Jer 51:59).

Jer 51:59 This is the message Jeremiah gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign.

Jer 51:60 Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon-- all that had been recorded concerning Babylon.

Jer 51:61 He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud.

Jer 51:62 Then say, 'O LORD, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither man nor animal will live in it; it will be desolate forever.'

Jer 51:63 When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates.

Jer 51:64 Then say, 'So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring upon her. And her people will fall.' The words of Jeremiah end here.

6.3 This would seem to explain, at least in part, why the proposed insurrection did not materialize at this time.

7. The next step toward overt rebellion was taken when Zedekiah leagued with Egypt--a treacherous and defiant move in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar. This act resulted in another invasion and the destruction of the Temple in 586.

7.1 The Scriptural record of this event is found in Jer 34 and 37, and in Eze 17. Josephus declares that the date was the eighth year of the reign of Zedekiah.

8. The final siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign on the tenth day of the tenth month.

8.1 The account of the siege and fall of the city is found in 2Ki 25 and chapters 39 and 52.

8.2 Because of a report that Hophra of Egypt was on his way to aid the beleaguered city, the siege was lifted for a short time as the Babylonian army deployed to meet this threat.

8.3 Although details are not available, it may be assumed that Egypt was summarily defeated, for Babylon resumed its siege of Jerusalem as Jeremiah had solemnly predicted would be the case (Jer 37:8-10).

Jer 37:8 Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.'

Jer 37:9 "This is what the LORD says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not!

Jer 37:10 Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

9. Conditions now became desperate. The strongly fortified city held out for nearly a year and a half, during which time the population suffered all the horrors of famine and pestilence.

9.1 A breach was finally made in the walls, and Zedekiah, seeing that all was lost, attempted to escape to the Jordan Valley.

9.2 Pursued and captured by the Chaldeans, he was brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, and there sentence was passed upon him.

9.3 The sons of Zedekiah were slain before him, after which his eyes were put out and he himself was taken in chains to Babylon, where he later died.

10. Thus were fulfilled the prophecies of Jeremiah chapter 34 and Ezekiel chapter 12 concerning the fate of Judah's last king.

Jer 34:2 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down.'

Jer 34:3 You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon.

Jer 34:4 "Yet hear the promise of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword;

Jer 34:5 you will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honor of your fathers, the former kings who preceded you, so they will make a fire in your honor and lament, 'Alas, O master!' I myself make this promise, declares the LORD."

Jer 34:6 Then Jeremiah the prophet told all this to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem,

Jer 34:7 while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah that were still holding out--Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

Eze 12:11 Say to them, 'I am a sign to you.' "As I have done, so it will be done to them. They will go into exile as captives.

Eze 12:12 "The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land.

Eze 12:13 I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and there he will die.

Eze 12:14 I will scatter to the winds all those around him-- his staff and all his troops-- and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

Eze 12:15 "They will know that I am the LORD, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

GEDALIAH (c. 586- 581)

1. Gedaliah was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 586 (2Ki 25:22-26).

2Ki 25:22 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to be over the people he had left behind in Judah.

2Ki 25:23 When all the army officers and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah--Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, and their men.

2Ki 25:24 Gedaliah took an oath to reassure them and their men. "Do not be afraid of the Babylonian officials," he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you."

End Lesson