

An Exegetical Commentary on

Jeremiah

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: JEREMIAH: MAN AND PROPHET

The year 627 BC was a crucial one in the history of redemption. That was the year that God ordained a timid young priest to the prophetic ministry. Jeremiah was destined to become the dominant figure of redemptive history during that eventful half-century from 625-575 BC. What kind of man did God choose to vocalize the final divine appeal to the condemned nation of Judah? How did God mold and shape the raw material that was Jeremiah of Anathoth?

In the opening verse of Jeremiah the author clearly identifies himself, his family, his lineage and his hometown. This is about all that is known of Jeremiah before his call to the public office of a prophet. These few notices, however, can be amplified by deductions drawn from the totality of Jeremiah's writings. What then can be said about Jeremiah the man?

HIS NAME

A great deal of importance was attached to names in the OT period—much more importance than is generally the case today. Modern parents when naming the newborn usually think in terms of the length of the name or euphonious sound. The ancients, however, always considered the background and meaning of a name. The name was to reflect the personality, the accomplishments, goals, or aspirations of a man. For this reason a man in antiquity might change his name at some critical juncture of his life.

A. Meaning: Scholars are in general agreement concerning the meaning of important biblical names. No such unanimity exists when it comes to the name of Jeremiah. The basic problem is in ascertaining the Hebrew root word from which this name has been constructed. Some scholars think it is derived from see a Hebrew root (*rum*) which means to arise, elevate or exalt. According to this interpretation the name Jeremiah means *the Lord exalts* or *exalted of the Lord* or even *the Lord establishes*. Others suggest that the name is derived from the Hebrew root *ramah* that means to cast or hurl. The name Jeremiah then means *the Lord throws down* or perhaps *the Lord hurls forth*.¹

B. Frequency: The famous prophet who is the subject of this study was not the only one to wear the name Jeremiah. Indeed the name seems to have been a common one. Evidence of its use can be found in several periods of OT history. At least seven other Jeremiahs are mentioned in Scripture. A Jeremiah was a leader in the tribe of Manasseh (1 Chron 5:24). Three of David's mighty

¹Still another interpretation of the name Jeremiah traces it back to an Assyrian root *ramu* meaning *to loosen*. The name would then mean *the Lord loosens (the womb)*.

men bore this name.² One of the fathers of the Rechabites was named Jeremiah (Jer 35:3). A Jeremiah of Libnah was the maternal grandfather of Jehoahaz king of Judah (2 Kgs 23:31). One of the leaders of the restoration community who signed a covenant to walk according to the law of Moses was called Jeremiah (Neh 10:2).

HIS FAMILY

What kind of family did Jeremiah have? Was he surrounded in those early, formative years by piety and godliness? Caution is in order when one goes beyond the explicit testimony of Scripture and the Word of God does not supply any specific information about Jeremiah's life in Anathoth.

A. Godly Family: It is best to think of Jeremiah as coming from a very devout family. His family was one steeped in the religious traditions of Israel and committed unequivocally to the true God. In his sermons Jeremiah reflects the spirit of the great prophets who preceded him. The words of these men of God were part of the fabric of his personality. He surely had been instructed in the Scriptures in his most tender years. Skinner writes:

His familiarity with the ideas of the older prophets, especially with those of Hosea, appears so soon after his call, and that call came to him so early in life, that we may safely assume that he had known the prophetic writings and assimilated the principles of their teaching before he had reached the age of manhood.³

At the time of his call in 627 BC Jeremiah was still a very young man (1:6). He must have been born about the year of 645 BC, near the end of King Manasseh's long and notorious reign. Perhaps the name of his father—Hilkiah—was more than a mere name; perhaps it was the family credo. The name *Hilkiah* means *the Lord is my portion*. During the reign of Manasseh, when apostasy was the order of the day and Assyrian idolatry was rampant through the land, this family had taken its stand. Though others were chasing after the latest fad in deities this family had boldly declared *the Lord is my portion*. Hilkiah, like Joshua before him, had proclaimed to the world *as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord* (Josh 24:15).

B. Influential Father: Is it mere coincidence that the high priest during the time of Josiah's reformation—the one who discovered the lost law book—bore the same name as Jeremiah's father? Is the father of Jeremiah the famous high priest Hilkiah? Scholars are practically unanimous in dismissing this identification. One cannot, of course, be dogmatic about the matter since the name Hilkiah seems to have been fairly common in this period (cf. Jer 29:3). *If*—and it must necessarily remain just that—*if* Jeremiah was the son of the high priest his ministry is placed in new perspective. One true prophet of God, Urijah, was executed during the reign of Jehoiakim (26:23-24). Though Jeremiah had some narrow escapes in the reign of this king, he survived. What

²1 Chron 12:4, 10, 13.

³John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 21.

made the difference? Could it be because Jeremiah belonged to one of the most prominent families in the land? Jeremiah had friends in high places.⁴ He was treated with respect (for the most part) by the successive rulers of Judah and the princes of Babylon.

While it is impossible to say with certainty that Hilkiah the high priest was in fact the father of Jeremiah, the thought is not impossible. As the son of a priest—possibly the high priest—Jeremiah no doubt frequently made the short trip to Jerusalem. There in the temple he had opportunity to observe, to ponder, to meditate and to contemplate the day when he would enter the active priesthood. Perhaps it was a high view of the priesthood, formed during his boyhood, which made Jeremiah so bitter against the worthless clergy of his adult years.

- C. Financial Standing.** A number of questions concerning the family of Jeremiah might be asked. It would be useless, however, to speculate about the answers. One point is at least probable: Jeremiah's family must have been financially well off. This conclusion is based on the fact that Jeremiah was able to buy the forfeited estate of a bankrupt kinsman (32:1-15).⁵ It is hard to imagine Jeremiah receiving any wages for his prophetic ministry; his means must have come through inheritance.

HIS HOMETOWN

- A. Priestly Community.** Jeremiah grew up in the town of Anathoth located about three miles northeast of Jerusalem. This town dates to pre-Israelite times and was named by the original Canaanite inhabitants after their goddess Anath. Following the Conquest, Anathoth, and thirteen other cities in the territories of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin, were set apart for priests.⁶ After Solomon built the temple the priests went up to Jerusalem at regular intervals to officiate in the religious ceremonies. Anathoth survives in the modern Anata.

Solomon banished the high priest Abiathar to Anathoth (1 Kgs 2:26). Abiathar was the last high priest of the line of Eli, the high priest during the last days of the Judges. Now since Abiathar retired to Anathoth, and since Jeremiah is said to have come from Anathoth (1:1), some commentators have jumped to the conclusion that Jeremiah was a descendant of Abiathar. Since Abiathar came from the priestly family of Ithamar, and since Hilkiah, the high priest of the Josian reformation, was of the priestly family of Eleazer, Jeremiah's father could not have been the famous Hilkiah. This argument is based on the unproved assumption that only descendants of Ithamar lived in Anathoth. Is this assumption, however, justified? Could not descendants of both Ithamar (Abiathar) and Eleazer (Hilkiah) have lived in this priestly town?

⁴Another interesting coincidence is that the uncle of Jeremiah (32:7) and the husband of Huldah the prophetess (2 Kgs 22:14) both were named Shallum. If these two Shallums are in fact one and the same person, Jeremiah is again linked through relatives to the Josian reformation.

⁵Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 348.

⁶Josh 21:13-19; 1 Chron 6:57-60.

B. Benjamite Community: Like Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, Jeremiah the prophet to the nations (Gentiles) was a Benjamite. It is repeatedly emphasized that Anathoth, though included in the kingdom of Judah and so close to its capital, was in the territory of Benjamin.⁷ Ethnologically Benjamin belonged to Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Perhaps this helps to explain Jeremiah's undying affection for the Rachel-tribes of the North and his longing for the homecoming of their exiled children.⁸

C. Rural Community: In the rural setting of Anathoth, Jeremiah was exposed to nature and profoundly influenced by it. His book reveals Jeremiah as a true outdoorsman. He observed, listened and learned from the animals and plants. He was familiar with the agricultural processes of his time and no doubt had spent many hard but happy days sowing, reaping and winnowing the grain as well as laboring in the vintage. Of course nature allusions can be found in other prophetic books; but Skinner is probably correct in his opinion that "we may find in Jeremiah's poetry traces of a closer sympathy with the life of nature than in any other prophet."⁹ An investigation of the nature metaphors and illustrations in the Book of Jeremiah tends to support this evaluation.

1. *Animal allusions:* Numerous allusions to animals are found in the Book of Jeremiah. The enemies of Judah are compared to lions,¹⁰ wolves (5:6), leopards, (5:6) and serpents (8:17). Jeremiah sees a picture of backsliding Judah in the young camel running helter-skelter in a trackless waste (2:23) and in the wild ass in heat desperately searching for a mate (2:24). Adulterers are compared to well-fed, lusty stallions neighing after the wives of their neighbors (5:8). Riches accumulated by unjust means are as precarious as the eggs of the partridge that has so many natural enemies (17:11). It is as impossible for Judah to change her disposition towards God as for a leopard to change its spots (13:23).

Judah, like a lion in the forest, had roared against God (12:8) and thus God must bring judgment upon the nation. Judah had become a strange speckled bird that is about to be attacked by other birds of prey (12:9). The beasts and birds will feed upon the carcasses of those who fall in battle.¹¹ The land will become desolate, forsaken by birds and beasts alike (4:25; 9:10). However the ruined cities of Judah will become a lair for jackals (9:11; 10:22). Perhaps the most striking animal figures employed in the book is that of the tender hind forsaking her young and the wild ass desperately sniffing the air for the scent of water during a terrible famine (14:5-6). Even nature suffers when mankind sins against God!

In a figure reminiscent of Isaiah 53 the prophet compares himself to a gentle lamb being led to the slaughter (11:9). He places in juxtaposition the contrariness of sinful man and the unfailing obedience of the migratory birds to the law of their creator (8:7).

⁷Jer 1:1; 32:8; 37:12.

⁸Jer 3:12f; 31:4-6, 15-20. See Skinner, op. cit., 19.

⁹Ibid., 22.

¹⁰Jer 2:15; 4:7; 5:6.

¹¹Jer 7:33; 15:3.

2. *Botanical allusions:* Jeremiah's allusions to plants and trees are almost as numerous as his mention of various animals. In several passages he pictures the withering of vegetation during famine (e.g., 7:20). He compares those who put their trust in God to a tree planted by a stream of water (17:6-7). Once Israel had been as a green olive tree; but shortly all the branches of that fair tree would be broken off and burned (11:16).
Jeremiah's favorite figure is that of the vine. Israel is God's vineyard (12:10) in which once flourished a choice vine. That vine, however, now had become degenerate and worthless (2:21). Hence the once-proud vine must be stripped of its branches (5:10). The remnant that will survive the destruction of Judah is compared to the few miserable grapes overlooked by grape gatherers.¹²
3. *Agricultural allusions:* Jeremiah was also fond of metaphors and illustrations drawn from the area of agriculture. He pictures the consternation of farmers as they confronted a national drought (14:4). The positive aspect of his ministry is compared to planting (1:10). In several passages he emphasizes the contrast between the barren wilderness through which God had earlier led the Israelites and the plentiful land into which the Lord had brought his people (e.g., 2:6-7). In the early days of her national history Israel was regarded by God with delight similar to a farmer looking upon the first fruits of his increase (2:3). Judah is shortly to reap the disappointing harvest of sin (12:13). The tempest of divine judgment, unlike the gentle winnowing wind, will sweep down upon them (4:11); the sinful people will be scattered like worthless stubble (13:24). For this reason Jeremiah earnestly pleads with his people to break up their fallow ground—to prepare the soil of their heart—that the seed of the word of God might take root in their lives (4:3).
4. *Other striking figures:* Still other striking nature figures are to be found in the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah refers to the perennial streams that flow down the sides of the snow-capped Lebanon Mountains (18:14) and to the tumultuous oceans that do not pass beyond their appointed bounds (5:22). His point was that even inanimate nature complied fully with the will of the Creator. Of all the creation only man had the audacity to violate the God-ordained principles of conduct. Jeremiah pictures the wicked men of Judah as fowlers who set their trap to catch men (5:26-27). The enemies of Judah are compared to fishers and hunters who will not allow any of their victims to escape (16:16). In one of his most humorous figures Jeremiah compares the pagan idols to a harmless, lifeless scarecrow in the middle of a cucumber field (10:5). On the other hand the God of Israel is the one who makes the vapors ascend from the earth and creates the lightning, wind and rain (10:13).

HIS TIMES

¹²Jer 6:9; 8:13.

To appreciate the ministry of Jeremiah one must thoroughly understand the times in which he lived. The public life of Jeremiah spans a period marked by political, social and religious changes of the utmost significance. This is particularly true of the years 627 to 586 BC, years of black disaster that culminated in the greatest catastrophe that had yet befallen the nation.

A. Political Conditions: Jeremiah lived in a crucial period of ancient Near Eastern history. It was a period characterized by political instability. Tiny Judah was involved the death struggle between the superpowers, Egypt to the South and Mesopotamia to the North. Jeremiah heard the news of the fall of Nineveh and watched as the great Assyrian colossus crumbled to the ground. He observed the rise of the Chaldean empire from its first defiance of Assyria until its smashing triumph at Carchemish (605 BC).

Jeremiah witnessed the desperate efforts of Pharaoh Neco to halt the inevitable Chaldean advance and saw the proud armies of Egypt flee in disarray before Nebuchadnezzar. He saw the armies of Chaldea smash through the feeble defenses of the land and force the surrender of Judah's young monarch. He saw thousands of his countrymen—the best citizens of the nation—deported to far-off Babylon. He saw the Chaldean battering rams systematically reduce the walls of Jerusalem to rubble.

Jeremiah saw the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar poured out on the faithless vassal king of Jerusalem as well as some of his officials. He saw a puppet government established in his land and then saw that government wiped out by ruthless extremists. The political turmoil and day-to-day uncertainty demanded the leadership of a man with unwavering confidence in the God of history. Jeremiah was that man.

B. Religious Conditions: Religiously, Judah was bankrupt during the times of Jeremiah. Under Manasseh (686-642 BC), the Assyrian religion had invaded Judah and had been accepted by the large masses of the people. Idolatry was rampant;¹³ pagan rites corrupted the worship of God at the altars of the temple (7:30). The gallant effort of Josiah to effect a reformation in the land did not have any effect on the hearts of the people.

While the external signs of pagan worship were temporarily removed by royal decree, the king was unable to rekindle within his people a genuine and lasting love for the Lord. This is not to suggest that the Jews ceased to perform the outward acts of worship to God. Throngs of people attended the great festivals at the temple in Jerusalem. The altar there never lacked for sacrificial animals. The finest incense was used by the priests.¹⁴ On occasion the people even fasted and prayed (14:12). All of this, however, was nothing more than mechanical ritual.

To make matters worse, the people were living with the religious fiction—promoted by their professional theologians—that they as the people of God were exempt from judgment and destruction. They had been assured by their

¹³Jer 2:10f; 8:2; 10:2 ff.; 44:15-19.

¹⁴Jer 6:20; 7:21.

learned prophets and priests that the Lord would never allow Jerusalem, much less his temple, to be destroyed. With his threats of divine retribution Jeremiah was the voice of one crying in the wilderness of theological delusion.

C. Moral Conditions: Jeremiah lived in corrupt times. In 7:9 the prophet summarizes the vices of his day: stealing, murder, adultery and false swearing. The house of God had virtually become a den of robbers (7:11). Human life was cheap. Infants were offered up as sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom.¹⁵ A faithful prophet of God was hunted down and executed by the tyrant Jehoiakim for no greater crime than preaching the word of the Lord (26:20-23). The Baal cult with its lewd and licentious "worship" had taken its toll. When Jeremiah refers several times to the harlotry being committed on the hills and under the green trees he is referring to the sexual orgies that passed for the worship of Baal.¹⁶ The men of Judah brazenly chased after the wives of their neighbors.¹⁷ Deceit and lying were so common that no one could be trusted, even members of one's own family (9:2-6). The people had completely lost their sense of sin (2:27). Wickedness prevailed everywhere and the national leadership seemed unconcerned (10:21).

D. Social Conditions: Socially, Judah was in turmoil throughout Jeremiah's days. Four major upheavals were caused by Josiah's reformation, Jehoiakim's exploitation, Babylonian deportation and Jerusalem's final submission to Babylon.

1. *Josiah's reformation:* The reformation of Josiah brought the first major upheaval to the society in which he lived. For over fifty years Judah had been a docile vassal state of the Assyrian empire. With the assassination of Amon (640 BC) a wave of nationalistic fervor swept over the land. As the reform movement got into high gear tremendous changes took place in Judah in a relatively short time. Idolatrous priests were executed (2 Kgs 23:5). Other priests had their ministries restricted to the temple in Jerusalem in compliance with the Mosaic law of the central sanctuary (2 Kgs 23:8-9). Wizards and witches were driven from the land (2 Kgs 23:24). While Josiah's actions were necessary and commendatory they were nonetheless divisive. Those who lost power, property or prestige during the reforms had their followers. No doubt the population was divided into camps of those who supported and those who opposed the royal reformation.
2. *Jehoiakim's exploitation:* Another socio-economic upheaval took place when Pharaoh Neco placed a vassal king on the throne in 609 bc. As the appointee of the Pharaoh, Jehoiakim was responsible for raising an enormous annual tribute.¹⁸ Though there is no direct evidence of it, there can be little doubt that the Egyptian levies put a severe strain on the

¹⁵Jer 7:31; 19:4-6.

¹⁶E.g., Jer 2:20; 3:6, 13.

¹⁷Jer 5:7-9; 9:2.

¹⁸2 Chron 36:3; 2 Kgs 23:35.

economy of the tiny country. Jehoiakim himself added to the misery of his people by his irresponsible building projects. He squandered the meager resources of his kingdom in erecting a magnificent but unnecessary new palace. When his funds were exhausted citizens were pressed into the royal service to work on the project without remuneration. Jeremiah had nothing but contempt for this petty tyrant (Jer 22:13).

3. *Babylonian deportation:* The deportation of 597 BC created yet another social upheaval in the ministry of Jeremiah. The king, the queen mother, the high officials and the leading citizens, together with an enormous booty were taken by Babylon. The nation again faced social and economic chaos. It must have been very difficult for society to function normally after all the craftsmen and skilled laborers had been carried away to Babylon. The deportation created a dearth of leadership in the land. Zedekiah the vassal king was weak, though seemingly well-intentioned, character. He could not or would not stand up to the princes who had become the real power in the kingdom. These royal advisers were men of small vision, low character and stubborn will.
4. *Jerusalem's submission:* The final great social upheaval came during and immediately after the Chaldean siege of Jerusalem in 588-586 BC. Children were orphaned and wives made widows during the prolonged defense of the city (Lam 5:3). Faced with starvation and death, mothers abandoned their children (Lam 2:11) or, even worse, ate them.¹⁹ When the city finally fell, the women were humiliated (Lam 5:11). All class distinctions were abolished; elders, priests, princes and common people were treated with equal disrespect and cruelty.²⁰ Young men were forced to push mill stones like animals; children staggered beneath loads of firewood (Lam 5:13). The tattered survivors of Jerusalem's fall had to barter with the Chaldeans for water and firewood (Lam 5:4). All the normal activities of Judean society had to be suspended during those terrible days (Lam 5:14-15).
5. *Economic disparity:* Throughout his ministry Jeremiah was concerned about the plight of the poor and helpless. They were being exploited by the powerful land owners as well as by the government. These men continued to enrich themselves by unscrupulous means (5:26-27). The poor were mistreated to the point of being physically abused. The agonizing cry of the suffering poor went up continually before the throne of God (6:7). Relief could not be obtained from the courts for they were completely corrupt (5:28). The poor, the fatherless, the widows and the foreign sojourners were completely at the mercy of these vicious men. Many were forced to sell themselves into slavery to pay their debts. The Mosaic Law that clearly required a slave-holder to release his Hebrew slaves after seven years of service, was set aside (34:12-16). Jeremiah's impassioned appeals for social justice went unheard and unheeded.²¹

¹⁹Lam 2:20; 4:10.

²⁰Lam 4:16; 5:12.

²¹Jer 7:6; 22:3.

HIS PERSONALITY

A.B. Davidson opines "the book of Jeremiah does not so much teach religious truths as present a religious personality."²² More biographical material is available for Jeremiah than for any other of the so-called writing prophets. Then, too, unlike other prophets Jeremiah reveals the inmost recesses of his mind. These considerations make a character evaluation of this prophet of God something more than exercise in imagination. Four outstanding personality traits are worthy of note.

A. Sensitivity: Jeremiah was a gentle man. Though he personally would have preferred the quiet rural life of Anathoth, he was thrust by circumstances into the limelight. In those turbulent times he became the center of controversy, the object of nefarious schemes, the butt of ridicule; he was subjected to a constant barrage of slander and persecution. While outwardly he stood in the face of this abuse like an iron pillar, inwardly he was a broken man. On occasion he sought to resign his prophetic ministry. Only the consciousness of having been predestined for his task, the sense of dedication, and the overpowering urge of God's Word within him, enabled this man to rise to the heights of his call.²³

B. Sympathy: How did a prophet of God feel when uttering threats of doom against his countrymen and against surrounding nations? Was he fierce, vindictive, and even joyful as he contemplated the destruction of "sinners"? Was he even self-righteously exulting? Some would have it so. This picture of the Hebrew prophets, however, belies the facts.

With a heavy heart Jeremiah predicted the doom of his beloved land; tears stained the manuscript when he penned his oracle of doom against Moab. Jeremiah did not desire to be the harbinger of evil (17:15f.). He laments for the people (4:19f.). He repeatedly displays his tenderness by fervently praying for his people (8:21-22). He acknowledged the necessity of judgment, yet he prays that it might be tempered (10:24); he pleads with God (14:8). It was no moment of malicious jubilation for Jeremiah when he saw his dire predictions coming to pass.

If it was with heavy heart that he uttered prophecies of doom, it was with still heavier heart that he witnessed the fulfillment. He had sympathy with the condemned. It was because of his sensitivity to personal abuse and his sympathy with those doomed for divine judgment that Jeremiah has been called the weeping prophet. It is, however, important to remember that "Jeremiah was no weeping willow; he was a stalwart oak of divine planting."²⁴

²²"Jeremiah the Prophet," *A Dictionary of the Bible* ed. James Hastings (New York: Scribner, 1909), 2:576.

²³H. Freedman, "Jeremiah," *Soncino Books of the Bible* (London: Soncino Press, 1949), xi.

²⁴"The Book of Jeremiah," *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 180.

C. Courage: By nature Jeremiah was shy and retiring; but when armed with divine courage he was a *fortified city, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land* (1:18). He braved the fury of the people, the princes and the crown. He vigorously denounced the moral and spiritual corruption in the land as well as the suicidal foreign policy of the kings of Judah. He did not flinch when threatened; he sealed the truth of his testimony by being willing to offer his life.

While others who called themselves prophets adjusted their message to harmonize with the popular theology of the day, Jeremiah could not and did not. On numerous occasions only a slight shift in emphasis, a single word of conciliation would have brought Jeremiah release from physical suffering if not honor among his contemporaries. He chose, however, to speak the truth at all cost. That cost to Jeremiah for his physical well-being was great.

D. Conviction: Jeremiah had an overwhelming and unshakable conviction that he had been called of God and that he spoke the word of God. While he was, for the most part, a prophet of doom, he also had faith in the future of his people. When Jerusalem was besieged and all looked hopeless, Jeremiah demonstrated his faith by buying a field (ch 32). He could see beyond the tragedy of exile. He was certain of the ultimate restoration of Israel.²⁵ When Jerusalem was in shambles and the faith of many faltered, Jeremiah stood like a rock. Through his beautiful poetry (now incorporated into the Book of Lamentations) he gave expression to the agony of his suffering and theologically perplexed people while at the same time pointing out to them the direction of spiritual recovery.

E. Conclusions: As far as personality is concerned, Jeremiah was the heir of the great prophets that preceded him. Hertz's assessment is this: "He combines the tenderness of Hosea, the fearlessness of Amos, and the stern majesty of Isaiah."²⁶ Freedman²⁷ describes him as "a realistic optimist." Jeremiah was realistic in the sense that he was not lulled into a false, and theologically unsound, sense of security; he was optimistic in that he could see beyond the darkness of the present hour the dawning of a new day. Naglesbach captured the paradox of this man of God when he wrote: "He was like a brazen wall, and at the same time like soft wax."²⁸ He was like a brazen wall in that no power could shake him; he was soft like wax because of his gentle disposition and his broken heart.

Jeremiah was a prophet. Such a statement though it might seem trite and unnecessary, is essential to the understanding of both this man and his book. Many superlatives have been used about Jeremiah. His eloquence and unusual poetic gifts have been praised; his profound insights, driving courage, unwavering commitment and fervent proclamation of the word of God make

²⁵Jer 16:14f; 32:37ff etc.

²⁶Cited by Freedman, *op. cit.*, xiv.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸C.W. Edward Naglesbach, "Jeremiah," *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical*, ed. John Peter Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 8.

him one of the truly outstanding heroes of Bible history. He was an honest man—honest enough to reveal to all succeeding generations his inner doubts, fears and frustrations. He was a gentle man who was filled with compassion for his countrymen. He was a statesman, the most outstanding statesman in Judah in those desperate days of the nation's dying agony. Jeremiah, however, was primarily a prophet of God. He believed to the very depths of his soul that he was a spokesman for the living God. If one fails to recognize this conviction in Jeremiah, or refuses to take this conviction seriously, he will never understand Jeremiah.

BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY

- A. His Call:** In the thirteenth year of King Josiah, 627 BC, Jeremiah was called by God to the prophetic ministry. The circumstances of his call are not known. Whether he was in the temple or at home or meditating on a green hillside cannot be determined. It was not his privilege to see a vision of divine majesty such as Isaiah saw; nor did he see visions of mysterious living creatures and wheels as did Ezekiel. His call experience, however, brought to Jeremiah the inescapable awareness that God had a claim on his life, and that he had been predestined to fill the prophetic office before he was born.
- B. His Reaction:** Like other great men of God, Jeremiah did not receive his call with eagerness. In fact he sought to escape or at least postpone the divine summons by pleading that he was too young for such responsibility. Jeremiah age at the time of his call cannot be computed precisely. Estimates range from fourteen to twenty. Certainly, then, he was young; but was this the real reason he shrank back from the task? Perhaps Jeremiah was more a realist than most people are in their youth. Perhaps he could foresee what would befall him as God's messenger and he wanted no part of it. Jeremiah did not desire to be a prophet and through the early part of his ministry he had a difficult time reconciling himself to his calling. Yet he did not quit; he could not quit. He knew that God had touched his lips, had given him a message. He had to preach!

DIMENSIONS OF HIS MINISTRY

The ministry was multi-dimensional. He was a preacher, a writer, an intercessor, a statesman and a counselor.

A. Jeremiah the Preacher:

1. *His authority:* Jeremiah felt an uncontrollable urge to proclaim the message of God. When he tried to hold back the word of God became a burning fire shut up in his bones (20:8-9). He could not forbear. God was speaking through his lips. For this reason he could preface his sermons with *thus says the Lord*; for this reason he could use the first person when presenting the divine demands.
2. *His purpose:* The purpose of Jeremiah's preaching ministry is succinctly stated in 1:10: God sent him *to pluck up, break down, destroy and overthrow*, but also *to build and plant*. The negative aspect of his ministry receives the greater emphasis in this verse. Jeremiah denounced sin and warned of judgment. Jeremiah, however, was not, as some critics have

presented him, merely a prophet of doom. There was a genuine positive thrust to his preaching. He offered realistic encouragement to those of his countrymen who had been deported to Babylon (ch 29). His predictions regarding the coming Messiah-Prince (23:1-8) and new covenant age (chs 31-34) are among the grandest in the OT.

3. *His location:* Jeremiah seems to have begun his preaching ministry in his native home of Anathoth. His words so angered the men of that town that they ordered him not to prophesy again in the name of the Lord. They threatened him with death if he did not cease preaching (11:21). During the early years of his ministry Jeremiah may have commuted from Anathoth to Jerusalem to deliver his thundering denunciations and threats of doom. The prophet did not restrict his preaching to the temple area.²⁹ He preached in the city gates (17:19), in prison (32:2), in the king's house,³⁰ and at the city dump (19:1). On one occasion he went into the streets throughout the land to proclaim his message (11:6).
4. *His lifestyle:* God spoke through what Jeremiah did and did not do. God spoke through his life as well as through his lips. It was almost unheard of in his day for a young man to remain unmarried, yet Jeremiah never took a wife. His abstinence from marriage was intended to demonstrate how perilous the times were (16:1-4). In view of the forthcoming national disaster Jeremiah could not think of marriage and children. He also refrained from attending parties and joyous festivities to dramatize that shortly all the sounds of joy would cease from the land (16:8-9). On the other hand, he did not attend funerals (16:5-7). Many were to die in the coming capture of Jerusalem. Those that remained would not find time for the customary funeral rites. What a sad life it must have been. At God's command he denied himself wifely companionship and normal social intercourse. He preached a sermon through his life.

B. Jeremiah the Actor: Jeremiah used dramatic symbolic acts and visual aids to capture the attention of an audience and underscore the point of his message. No doubt Jeremiah would be accused today of sensationalism and melodramatics. Many of his actions, even by standards of that day, were bizarre. The accredited clergy cast aspersion upon him and hinted that he was deranged (29:26). It might be helpful and convenient to list Jeremiah's action parables, as they are sometimes called, in the order in which they occur in the book.³¹

1. *Linen girdle:* Jeremiah was instructed to get a linen girdle, wear it, bury it and then, after many days, to retrieve it. The marred and rotten garment was then used to symbolize the corruption and consequent worthlessness of Judah that had once been so very close to God (13:1-11).
2. *Smashed jar:* He was told to take an earthen vessel, go out to the city dump, and smash the bottle in the sight of the elders of the people. Thus would God smash Jerusalem because of the idolatry practiced there (19:1-13).
3. *Wine cup:* Jeremiah was commanded to take a cup of wine representing the wrath of God and cause all the nations of Syria-Palestine to drink from it (25:15-28).
4. *Wooden yoke:* The prophet appeared for sometime in public wearing a wooden yoke such as was commonly worn by oxen (27:2). It is possible that miniature yokes were given to the foreign ambassadors who had gathered in Jerusalem to be carried back to their respective lands (27:3). The yoke-bars and thongs, the prophet declared, represented Nebuchadnezzar's right to rule by divine decree (27:4-7). That yoke so enraged one of

²⁹Jer 7:2; 26:2.

³⁰Jer 22:1; 37:17.

³¹Some of the acts listed above have been interpreted as being simply visions translated into ordinary narrative. Others have suggested that these acts are altogether imaginary, that is, a recognized rhetorical fiction.

Jeremiah's adversaries that he ripped it from the neck of the prophet and smashed it in the temple (28:10).

5. *Purchased plot*: When Jerusalem was under siege and Jeremiah was confined in the court of the prison, the Lord instructed him to buy a plot of ground from a relative (32:6ff). Jeremiah was careful to execute the purchase in the proper legal manner. This transaction was to demonstrate to the embattled populace of Jerusalem that Jeremiah had faith in the future of the land. After the destruction and deportation of the population, at some point in the future, houses, fields and vineyards would again be bought and sold in the land of Judah.
6. *Rechabites*: The prophet took those teetotalers—the Rechabites—to the temple and offered them wine to drink. In loyal obedience to their ancestor, the Rechabites refused to partake of the fruit of the vine. Jeremiah used the faithfulness of this clan to the instructions of their earthly father to rebuke the unfaithfulness of Judah to their heavenly Father (35:1-19).
7. *Buried stones*: The prophet in Egypt continued to use symbolic acts. He hid great stones beneath the brick pavement in front of the house of Pharaoh in Tahpanhes. That action marked the spot where Nebuchadnezzar would one-day erect his royal pavilion (43:8-11).
8. *Sunken scroll*: Jeremiah instructed a faithful follower to read a scroll in Babylon and then sink it in the Euphrates River (51:61-64). By this act the ultimate overthrow of Babylon dramatically was portrayed.

Thus by his non-actions and by his actions Jeremiah dramatized the message. His unusual behavior attracted attention and created opportunities for formal oral discourse. Those who are attempting to bring the message of God to communities where men are indifferent, unconcerned and hostile might well learn a lesson here: one must first capture the attention of an audience before he can effectively communicate the word of God.

C. Jeremiah the Writer:

1. *A letter*: Jeremiah was not only a preacher; he was also a writer. He felt duty-bound to deal with the delusions of Jewish captives in Babylon; so he wrote a letter to them (29:1). This letter must have been widely circulated among the exiles for it created quite a stir. False prophets in Babylon sent a letter back to the high priest in Jerusalem demanding that Jeremiah be silenced (29:24-29).
2. *A scroll*: When Jeremiah was forbidden by the authorities to preach his message of doom he committed his sermons to writing. A scroll dictated by Jeremiah to his faithful scribe got the prophet in trouble with King Jehoiakim. This scroll, which was in reality the first edition of the Book of Jeremiah, contained excerpts from the sermons during Jeremiah's first two decades of preaching. When the scroll was read in his presence, Jehoiakim slashed it to pieces and burned it upon a brazier. Jeremiah then produced a second copy of the scroll adding to the original contents *many like words* (36:32). Eventually this scroll developed into what is today the canonical Book of Jeremiah.
3. *Lamentations*: Jeremiah also composed certain lamentations. He is said to have lamented the death of King Josiah (2 Chron 35:25). This suggests that he composed a poetic lamentation over the death of that fine king. Tradition is consistent in assigning the Book of Lamentations to the prophet Jeremiah. In the oldest arrangements of the books of the Hebrew Bible the Book of Lamentations seems to have been part of the Book of Jeremiah. It is not possible to determine precisely when Lamentations was separated from the Book of Jeremiah.

Besides the Book of Jeremiah and Lamentations, Jeremiah may also have compiled the Book of Kings.³² The Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 15a, states categorically that Jeremiah wrote the Book of Kings. The usage of the word *wrote* in this passage of *Baba Bathra* suggests that the statement means that the prophet was the editor of the Book of Kings.³³

4. *Some psalms?:* Scholars have suggested that Jeremiah may have been the author of some of the Biblical psalms. Psalms 22, 31, 40, 55, 69, and 71 are so permeated with the "spirit of Jeremiah" that they have been ascribed to the pen of this prophet. These psalms do contain certain circumstantial parallels to the life of Jeremiah. None of the psalms ascribed to Jeremiah, however, allude to his prophetic office or his conflict with "false prophets." Figurative expressions like *sinking in the mire and in the deep water* (Ps 69:2, 14) "require no groundwork of literal biographical fact."³⁴

Most important is this fact: each of the psalms ascribed by modern critics to Jeremiah is attributed to David in the heading of the psalm. No good reason has yet been offered to deny that these psalms are in fact Davidic. The Ugaritic texts discovered in 1929 prove that poetic composition was a highly developed art centuries before David. Considering this evidence, the testimony of the psalm headings becomes even more compelling. The internal circumstantial similarity between these psalms and the life of Jeremiah does not offset this other evidence. Jeremiah probably did not write any of the biblical psalms.

5. *Apocryphal writings:* The apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature attributes at least three additional writings to Jeremiah. Two of these are worthy of note. The first is the so-called *Epistle of Jeremiah* is supposedly a letter written by the prophet to the Jews who were about to be led as captives to Babylon. In this letter the author warns his readers about the dangers of idolatry. This short book appears in the Roman Catholic Douay version of the OT as the sixth chapter of the apocryphal *Book of Baruch*, a pseudepigraph (forged document) written many years after the death of Jeremiah (ca. 300-100 BC).

The second is the *Paralipomena of Jeremiah*, also called the *Rest of the Words of Baruch* is chiefly concerned with Ebed-melech the Ethiopian who befriended Jeremiah in one of his darkest hours (Jer 38:7-13). This writing appears to be even later than the former. It contains some passages obviously of Christian origin. Jeremiah could not have been responsible for either of these documents.

- D. Jeremiah the Intercessor:** The Book of Jeremiah is rich with thought-provoking material on the subject of prayer. All the great prophets were men of prayer. Jeremiah, however, is the only prophet whose prayers are on record in sufficient quantity to invite analysis. They are all but unique in prophetic literature.³⁵

1. *Types of prayers:* Jeremiah's prayers for the nation fall into several categories: (1) In a prayer of complaint Jeremiah charges God with deceiving and misleading the people (4:10). (2) In a prayer of perception Jeremiah acknowledges that God's disciplinary dealings with Judah have been fair and just (5:3). (3) In a blistering attack against idolatry, Jeremiah burst forth into a prayer of praise (10:6-7). (4) In a prayer for clarification Jeremiah asks God to explain why he has been instructed to buy a plot of ground in Judah when God had commissioned him to preach the destruction of the nation (32:16-25). It is however, (5) the prayer of intercession that merits closer attention.

³²The two books of Kings of the English and Greek OT are counted as one book in the Hebrew Bible.

³³The same passage of *Baba Bathra* asserts that Hezekiah and his associates wrote the books of Isaiah, Proverbs, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes; the men of the Great Synagogue wrote the books of Ezekiel, the twelve Minor Prophets, Daniel, and the Scroll of Esther.

³⁴T.K. Cheyne, "Jeremiah," *The Pulpit Commentary* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, n.d.), xii.

³⁵Sheldon H. Blank, *Jeremiah, Man and Prophet* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1961), 92.

2. *Language of intercession:* One of the great ministries of the prophets was to engage in intercessory prayer for their people. Jeremiah was no exception. On the other hand, Jeremiah regarded the failure to engage in intercessory prayer as an indication of the falsity of certain self-proclaimed prophets (27:18). Jeremiah apparently regarded the ministry of intercession as one of the hallmarks of a true prophet of God.

Three Hebrew expressions in Jeremiah are of particular importance in understanding the biblical concept of intercession. The verb *palal* means *to pray* but it has the overtones of argument, of presenting a logical case in defense of someone. The intercessor, then, is like a lawyer who pleads his case before the divine Judge. The expression "to stand before" is also used of prayer. This expression comes from the vocabulary of the royal court. Thus the intercessor is one who has access to the council chambers of God, and uses his influence there for the well-being of the people he represents. The third Hebrew word, *paga'*, has the idea of an impassioned emotional appeal. The intercessor is one who pours out his heart as well as his mind on behalf of the people he loves.

3. *Evidence of intercession:* Jeremiah prayed on behalf of his people. Several lines of evidence point in this direction.
 - a. *Requests for intercession:* On more than one occasion individuals came to the prophet and requested that he pray on their behalf. Twice king Zedekiah sent messengers to Jeremiah requesting prayer.³⁶ Following the assassination of Gedaliah the leaders of the remnant requested Jeremiah for divine guidance (42:2, 20).
 - b. *Divine prohibitions:* Three times the Lord instructed Jeremiah not to pray for the people of Judah.³⁷ A fourth passage has the force of a prohibition though it is not in the imperative mood (15:1).
 - c. *Direct reference:* In one of his personal prayers Jeremiah alludes to his ministry of intercession: *Remember how I stood before you to speak good on their behalf, to turn away your wrath from them* (18:20b).
 - d. *Prayer fragments:* Fragments of Jeremiah's intercessory prayers that have been preserved in the book. In one of these prayers Jeremiah so completely identifies with his suffering people that he employs the singular pronoun *me* for the nation. It is as though the nation personified is speaking to God through Jeremiah's mouth (10:23-25). During a terrible drought Jeremiah, speaking as a member of the suffering nation, calls upon God to extend mercy to his people (14:7-9). Perhaps the most beautiful of the fragments of intercession is found in 14:19-22. Here Jeremiah skillfully mingles a series of rhetorical questions with confessions of sin and appeals for divine mercy.

E. Jeremiah the Statesman:

1. *His position:* In ancient Israel the functions of church and state could not be separated into neat compartments. Israel was a theocracy, a nation under the direct government of God. All areas of national life were to be directed by the word of God as revealed through his accredited messengers. For this reason Jeremiah—and most of the other prophets for that matter—became involved in what today would be classified as political activity. Jeremiah's political position can be summed up in one principle: Submit to Babylon.
2. *His patriotism:* The patriotism of Jeremiah has been called into question by more than one modern writer. Did not Jeremiah advocate capitulation to the Chaldeans? Did he not encourage the defenders of Jerusalem to desert during those last desperate days before Jerusalem was captured? Such conduct would certainly be considered treason today! If a

³⁶Jer 21:2; 37:3.

³⁷Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11.

government fully commits itself to a definite and irrevocable policy, patriotism would demand at least silent acquiescence. Was Jeremiah then a traitor? In defense of Jeremiah it is important to make several observations.

- a. *Jeremiah was no coward:* Though he advised others to desert to the enemy he did not follow his own advice. He was convinced that Jerusalem would fall to the Chaldeans and be destroyed yet he chose to remain within the city. Strange traitor, this man who refused to desert a sinking ship.
- b. *Jeremiah was not a hireling:* When Jerusalem fell the Chaldeans wished to reward this prophet who for so many years had advocated capitulation to Babylon. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Jeremiah was a fifth columnist on the Chaldean payroll and that his job was to wage psychological warfare within the walls of Jerusalem. If, however, this prophet was a hireling it is most strange that he pointedly refused a life of luxury and ease in Babylon. He chose rather to cast his lot with the tattered remnant who remained in the land after the disaster of 586 bc. Strange traitor this man who refused to take reward for his treason.
- c. *Jeremiah was not malevolent:* He took no delight in the message of doom he was compelled to preach to his countrymen. Earnestly he prayed for them. He was not anti-Judah. He loved his nation and wanted it to survive as a nation. He could not comprehend why God must utterly destroy Judah and he did not hesitate to confess this lack of understanding to his creator. Strange traitor, this man who so earnestly prayed for the survival of his nation.
- d. *Jeremiah was no prophet of doom,* at least in the sense that this epithet is usually used. True, he did forecast the defeat of his nation by an enemy force; but Jeremiah believed firmly in the future of his people (31:31-34). He demonstrated that belief by buying a plot of ground at the very time when the Chaldean armies were sweeping through the land (32:6-15). Jeremiah persisted to the end in a "heaven-born assurance of the immortality and spiritual regeneration of his people."³⁸ Strange traitor this man who had such confidence in the future of his nation.
- e. *Jeremiah was no political theoretician.* His counsel to yield to Babylon without a struggle was not politically motivated or dictated by mere prudence. In denouncing revolution against Babylon Jeremiah was running counter to the opinions of the best statesmen of Syria-Palestine including Judah. It was not the mere fact that resistance was suicidal that caused him to call for surrender and submission. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that Jeremiah had no admiration for the Babylonian imperial system. In fact he boldly predicted that after the divinely assigned period of world supremacy Babylon too would taste of the wrath of God. Strange traitor this man who was so outspoken against the enemy of his people.
- f. *Jeremiah was no pacifist.* Though he opposed resistance to the Chaldeans he did not oppose war as such. As a matter of fact Jeremiah preached that the impending conflict was divinely ordained. God was involved in the struggle (21:5), but he was fighting on the side of the Chaldeans. Those who would equate pacifism with treason certainly cannot question the patriotism of Jeremiah on these grounds.

In Jeremiah one can see what John Bright calls "patriotism on a deeper level."³⁹ The religious idea with which he was inspired was higher and broader than conventional ideas of patriotism. Israel had a divinely appropriated work to do; if Israel failed to perform that

³⁸Cheyne, op. cit., xi.

³⁹Bright, op. cit., cix.

mission, it had no further right to exist. To state the matter another way, Judah was a theocracy in rebellion against its divine king. Jeremiah was the inspired spokesman for God to those rebellious people. The God who knows the future had revealed to Jeremiah what the future course of political events in the ancient Near East would be. This prophet did not formulate his advice based on political or personal expediency. He knew whereof he spoke. History has vindicated his position.

F. Jeremiah the Counselor: Jeremiah was not only concerned with crowds, oratory and national policy; he was concerned as well for individuals. His counseling settled around three individuals.

1. *Zedekiah:* Zedekiah the king had many agonizing decisions to make during the last days of Judah. On more than one occasion he sought out Jeremiah to ask his inspired counsel (37:17; 38:14ff.). Jeremiah was not a practitioner of the non-directive technique in counseling. He clearly explained for Zedekiah the alternative courses of action and the consequences of each. If Zedekiah would surrender to Nebuchadnezzar the city would be saved; if he did not, the city was doomed. When Zedekiah expressed fear over his personal fate should he surrender, Jeremiah reassured him that his fears were unfounded. He tried to help the king see that selfish considerations must be secondary. Thousands would suffer if the king persisted in resisting Babylon. Jeremiah's private conversations with Zedekiah reveal the consistency and honesty of this man of God. He did not succumb to the temptation to tailor God's word to fit the individual but rather sought to bring the individual into harmony with God's will.
2. *Baruch:* The weeping prophet knew personal agony and despondency and thus could have empathy with those who suffered. To Baruch, a frustrated and discouraged disciple, Jeremiah spoke a tender word from the Lord. His message to Baruch in ch. 45 when properly understood is a masterpiece of counseling technique. By revealing to Baruch the genuine and unparalleled suffering of God, Jeremiah helped that scribe to place his own predicament in proper perspective.
3. *Ebed-melech:* Equally tender and pertinent is Jeremiah's brief word for Ebed-melech (39:15-18). This Ethiopian servant was terrified at the prospect of falling into the hand of the Chaldean soldiers who were attacking Jerusalem. Doubtless he feared that all the servants of King Zedekiah would be slain when the enemy stormed into the city. The God who loved individuals as much as he loved nations sent his prophet to that noble Negro slave with a comforting word. Ebed-melech would not fall into the hands of those whom he feared.

Whether dealing with the paralyzing indecision of Zedekiah, the gloomy despondency of Baruch or the terrifying fear of Ebed-melech Jeremiah was the master counselor. He did not always wait for the distressed to seek him out; he went to them. He was straightforward and honest, yet tender and compassionate as he dealt with the needs of individuals.

CHRONOLOGY OF HIS MINISTRY

The reconstruction of the life and career of Jeremiah is not an easy task. For the period following 609 BC an abundance of dated biographical material from the book can be used. When this material is placed in chronological order, one has a fairly complete outline of the latter part of the prophet's career. For information about the pre-609 BC career of the prophet, however, one must depend upon undated oracles and sermons. For this reason the greatest caution needs to be exercised in reconstructing the early phases of the ministry of Jeremiah.

Some modern scholars have questioned whether Jeremiah had a ministry before 609 BC. May and Hyatt,⁴⁰ for example, believe that Jeremiah did not begin to prophesy until after the reformation of Josiah—near the end of Josiah's reign or beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (ca. 609 BC). Not allowing for genuine predictive prophecy, these scholars insist that the *foe from the north* in chs 1-6 must be explained against the background of the emerging Chaldean menace. For those who accept the testimony of the book itself, however, the matter of dating is settled by the clear statements of 1:2 and 25:3. The ministry of Jeremiah began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, 627 BC.

The prophetic career of Jeremiah can be divided into five periods.

A. Pre-reformation Period (627-621 BC): The early phase of Jeremiah's ministry extends from the divine call (627 BC) to the reformation under Josiah (621 BC). During this five-year period the energetic Jeremiah joined forces with Zephaniah in thundering forth denunciations of apostasy. Intermingled with these verbal assaults against the national sin, however, are impassioned pleas for repentance (3:19-4:2). One can scarcely doubt that the powerful preaching of Zephaniah and Jeremiah helped pave the way for the reforms of King Josiah.

B. Post-reformation Period (621-605 BC): The years following the reformation of Josiah and before the battle of Carchemish are practically a blank as far as the career of Jeremiah is concerned. Scholars are in disagreement about Jeremiah's attitude towards Josiah's reforms. Some picture the prophet as bitterly opposed to the reform; others think he actively supported the efforts of the young king; still others argue that Jeremiah supported the aims of the reformation but took no active part in it. Most scholars believe that following the reformation of 621 BC Jeremiah entered into a period of silence.

Two pieces of evidence seem to indicate Jeremiah's sympathy with the Josian reform. First, Jeremiah publicly expressed almost unbounded admiration for Josiah (22:15f.). This would be most strange if Jeremiah felt that his reform efforts were inappropriate, inadequate or futile. Second, those who stood up for Jeremiah during his controversial ministry and who intervened to save his life were themselves leaders in the reform effort or came from families that were instrumental in the reform. Ahikam son of Shaphan (26:24) was among the delegation that took the lost book of the law to Huldah the prophetess for identification. Gemariah son of Shaphan (36:10, 25) must have been a brother of Ahikam. Elnathan, another prince who defended the writing of Jeremiah (36:12, 25), was the son of Achbor who had been active in the Josian reform (cf. 2 Kgs 22:12). It is unlikely that Jeremiah would have received the support of these families if he had opposed the reforms of Josiah.

Scripture affirms that Josiah began to seek the Lord while he was yet young, in the eighth year of his reign. He began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of all of idolatrous paraphernalia in the twelfth year of his reign (2 Chron 34:3). Jeremiah was called to the prophetic ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah (1:2) one year after the reform got started and five years before the discovery of the lost law book. It is important to note that the discovery of the lost book was the result of the reformation and not the cause of it.

Jeremiah's preaching during the five years between the beginning of the reformation and the discovery of the law book must surely have helped pave the way for further reforms. Some have interpreted 11:6 to mean that Jeremiah got involved in the reformation efforts and went about the countryside as its chief advocate. If, however, Jeremiah was a supporter of the reforms of the king, why did Josiah consult Huldah the prophetess concerning the newly discovered law book instead of Jeremiah? Does this not indicate that the king regarded Jeremiah as un-sympathetic to the cause? Not necessarily. Jeremiah was still young and relatively unknown. Perhaps he had not yet left the rural areas to begin his ministry in the capital.

C. Middle Period (605-597 BC): After the battle of Carchemish (605 BC) the prophet began a new phase of his ministry. The great clash between the Egyptians/Assyrians and the Chaldeans,

⁴⁰H.G. May, "The Chronology of Jeremiah's Oracles," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 4 (1945) 217-27; P. Hyatt, "Jeremiah and Deuteronomy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1942) 156-73; J.P. Hyatt, "The Foe From the North in Jeremiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 59 (1940) 499-513.

marked a turning point in the life of Jeremiah as well as in world history. From that time Jeremiah explicitly named Babylon as the chosen agent of destruction of Judah. Babylon was to Jeremiah what Nineveh had been to Isaiah. The prophet foresaw and announced the prophetic program of God for the next seventy years. God had allocated to Babylonian world supremacy a period of seventy years. During that period any nation that refused to submit to the yoke of Babylon would be destroyed. The year 605 BC was important to Jeremiah in the form as well as the content of his message. It was in 605 BC that Jeremiah received instruction from the Lord to commit his prophecies to writing, apparently for the first time (ch 36).

- D. Pre-destruction Period (597-586 BC):** The year 597 BC, in which several thousand Jews including the royal household were taken to Babylon, marked another milestone in the ministry of Jeremiah. Jeremiah believed that those captives in Babylon were the real hope of the nation. He was looking beyond the tragedy of 586 BC to a new community that the Lord would establish. During this phase of his ministry Jeremiah appears in the role of the king's counselor. The counsel of Jeremiah ran counter to that of the powerful young princes who seemed to control King Zedekiah. For that reason Jeremiah suffered immeasurably during this decade.
- E. Post-destruction Period (After 586 BC):** The final phase of the ministry of Jeremiah begins in 586 BC, the year in which Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah was broken in body but not in spirit. While the old man could have closed out his life in luxury and ease in Babylon, he chose to cast his lot with the tattered remnant that remained in Palestine. After the assassination of Gedaliah, Jeremiah was forced to accompany the terrified remnant to Egypt. His last recorded sermons were delivered on foreign soil. Though well into his sixties, Jeremiah had lost none of his fervor or fire. He still cried out against idolatry and predicted divine judgment upon those who refused to turn to the Lord with all their heart. In that foreign land Jeremiah ended his prophetic ministry; there probably he was buried.

VICISSITUDES OF HIS MINISTRY

- A. Internal Stress:** The life and ministry of Jeremiah were filled with discouragement and danger.
1. *Failure to "get through":* To preach to people for decades and realize no tangible results places a great burden on the heart of a minister. So it was with Jeremiah. He preached powerfully, eloquently and passionately, but no one seemed to listen. This constant failure to "get through" to the people affected Jeremiah negatively.
 2. *Painful observation:* Jeremiah suffered intense personal pain as he watched the nation advancing step by step on the road to ruin. When he saw that the spirit of disobedience and rebellion in his countrymen was seemingly past remedy he still prayed that they might be spared. Finally when God forbade him to offer any more intercessory prayers on behalf of Judah, Jeremiah realized that the doom of his people was inevitable and irreversible. Only the complete overthrow of the nation could effect a cure for the malignancy of transgression that had permeated the land.
 3. *Painful expectation:* Jeremiah shed many tears over the impending doom of his people. He could see so clearly in his mind's eye the bloodshed and death and carnage that would accompany the assault by the enemy from the North. Frequently he burst forth in bitter lamentation.⁴¹ Once he cried out: *Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of*

⁴¹See 4:19-21; 8:1-9:1; 9:10; 10:19; and 14:17-18.

tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people (9:1). In one of his sermons following a particularly eloquent appeal for repentance Jeremiah added: But if you will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride; and my eye shall weep sore and run down with tears, because the flock of Yahweh is taken captive (13:17).

- B. Life-style Stress:** The burden of Jeremiah's suffering was somewhat increased by the restrictions placed upon his life and ministry by the Lord. He was forbidden to marry (16:2) and hence had to bear his suffering without the solace afforded by wifely companionship. He was forbidden to attend social gatherings, even funerals (16:1, 8). While these prohibitions served a wise and useful purpose they nonetheless added to the personal agony of this broken-hearted man.
- C. External Persecution:** Add to the discouragement of this prophet the danger that he constantly faced in his ministry and the biography of Jeremiah becomes truly pathetic. Almost daily he suffered hostility and abuse from the people he was trying to help. Early in his ministry the men of his own hometown plotted against him (11:9ff.). On one occasion he was arrested by the chief officer of the temple, flogged, and forced to endure the pain and humiliation of exposure in the public stocks (20:1f.).

Following one of his mighty sermons in the temple Jeremiah was seized by a mob and hastily put on trial for his life (26:11ff.). For a time Jeremiah was declared to be *persona non grata*. He was restrained from entering the temple area (36:5). His first literary production was ruthlessly destroyed by a tyrant king (36:23ff.). For a time he was forced to go into hiding to escape the wrath of this king (36:26). Back in circulation again, he was assaulted by a rival prophet (28:10f.).

A letter from Babylon urged further violence against Jeremiah (29:24ff.). While attempting to leave Jerusalem on a private business matter, the prophet was arrested and accused of treasonous desertion to the enemy (37:11ff.). Confinement in prison threatened the health of the prophet (37:20). He was lowered into an empty but damp cistern and left to die without food or water (38:6). Delivered from that danger he yet remained under arrest (38:13).

Jeremiah was released from custody when the Chaldeans captured Jerusalem, but then through the blunder of some junior officer was again put in chains to be carried away to Babylon (40:1). Released by the Chaldean commanding general, Jeremiah chose to cast his lot with the tattered remnant of his people. His suffering was not yet at an end, however. Shortly the old man of God was abducted to Egypt where he spent his last years in forced exile from his beloved home land (43:5f.). "His whole life," says one writer, "is a series of dramatic rescues at the hand of unexpected people."⁴²

- D. Agonizing Outcries:** It is on the background of this intense personal pain and persecution that the so-called confessions of Jeremiah must be interpreted. In these prayers, which all appear in the second ten chapters of the book, Jeremiah asks for justice. Standing before the Judge of all the earth Jeremiah presents the case for himself and against his adversaries.
1. *Personal defense:* In defense of his own conduct, the prophet points to his tireless efforts to persuade the people of Judah to repent. He has to the best of his ability carried out the divine commission that had been given to him (17:16). He has said and done only that which God had authorized. He had animosity for no one and had offended neither his

⁴²Norman C. Habel, "Jeremiah," *Concordia Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 13.

people nor his God (15:10). He had prayed for the salvation of his nation.⁴³ Why then is his life so turbulent? (15:15-17). Why does he suffer so? (18:20).

2. *Narrative prayer*: In narrative prayer Jeremiah told God the tragic story of his life and ministry, and he does something more. He sought to disparage the activities of his adversaries. He vividly described in these prayers the vicious behavior of those who had pitted themselves against him. They had cursed (15:10), taunted (17:15) and ridiculed (20:8) God's duly appointed representative. They had openly blasphemed God as well (12:2, 4). They were hypocritical (12:6) and treacherous (20:10). They were plotting the death of the prophet from Anathoth.⁴⁴ By placing his innocence in juxtaposition with the guilt of his enemies Jeremiah was calling the attention of God to the injustice of the whole situation. He was setting the stage for his plea.
3. *Urgent appeals*: After Jeremiah presented his case before God he made his appeal. At times his plea was direct and unambiguous. He prays that God will vindicate his prophet and pour out vengeance upon his enemies.⁴⁵ In some of his prayers he calls down in dreadful detail the wrath of God upon his adversaries.⁴⁶ These imprecations are perhaps the most difficult passages in the book to comprehend. Are they to be interpreted as a sudden ebullition of natural anger?
4. *Imprecations*: Jeremiah did not desire the destruction of his people and in fact prayed for their deliverance.⁴⁷ Those upon whom Jeremiah calls down the wrath of the Almighty are the religious leaders who had so beguiled the people and persecuted the prophet. They had spurned the appointed representatives of the God of Israel; they had hindered the word of God. When Jeremiah called upon God to destroy these wicked men he did not speak with vindictive enmity. He spoke rather as the official representative of God. God's cause was being hindered; God's honor was at stake. It was his zeal for God and desire for the triumph of righteousness that caused Jeremiah to pray for the destruction of these sinners. The so-called imprecations are in reality pronouncements of judgment. They are not unlike the "woes" which Jesus pronounced against the religious leaders of His generation (see Mt 23).
5. *Accusations*: Sometimes the plea in Jeremiah's personal prayers is less direct, taking the form of accusation or of a bold rhetorical question. Jeremiah accused God of enticing him and forcing him into the ministry (20:7) and filling him with gloom (15:17). Perhaps his most bitter accusation is found in 15:18b: *You are indeed to me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail!* He is accusing God of being unfaithful and unreliable. These accusations against God amount to an appeal. The prophet was asking for release from a situation that he viewed as unbearable.

The rhetorical questions in his prayers amount to accusations. The troubled prophet asked God *Shall evil be rewarded for good?* (18:20a). Again he asked: *Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable?* (15:18a). In 12:1b he asked the question suffering men have asked as far back as one can trace the literary records of the human race: *Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?* Both of these questions suggest that something has gone wrong in the world. Righteous men suffer; wicked men prosper. Jeremiah knows that God is just. It is to his justice that Jeremiah appeals in both his accusations and his rhetorical questions.

⁴³Jer 18:20; 15:11.

⁴⁴Jer 18:18; 11:21.

⁴⁵Jer 15:15; 17:17, 18.

⁴⁶Jer 17:18; 18:21-23; 12:3.

⁴⁷Jer 17:16; 18:20; 15:11.

E. Rare Bright Spots:

1. *Handful of friends:* The biographical picture of Jeremiah is not entirely black. Though it might have seemed to Jeremiah that every hand was against him, he was not altogether friendless. The elders of the land defended Jeremiah at his trial. A certain prince named Ahikam used his influence to get the prophet acquitted. Baruch was a faithful friend. He joined Jeremiah in hiding, wrote his first book for him, read it in public and apparently remained with his master until the end in Egypt. Numbered among his friends are the court officials who saw to it that King Jehoiakim got a chance to hear the words written in Jeremiah's scroll and who protested when that scroll was destroyed by the king. A temple official by the name of Zephaniah came under personal attack for allowing Jeremiah to preach in the temple. Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian servant of King Zedekiah, risked his own life to rescue Jeremiah from a foul pit. Even Zedekiah himself on certain occasions befriended the prophet. Finally there was Gedaliah with whom Jeremiah would have spent his last days had this governor not been struck down by the blow of an assassin.
2. *Occasional triumphs.* There were occasional triumphs in his ministry. Jeremiah's defense of his prophetic preaching was vindicated when he was on trial for his life. When Nebuchadnezzar lifted the siege of Jerusalem to deal with an attack by Egyptian forces, Jeremiah alone correctly assessed the situation. In a matter of weeks his confident assertion that the Chaldean would return to the siege of the city was vindicated. Twice the king sought him out to ask his counsel. The remnant came to him to seek his guidance following the death of Gedaliah. Nevertheless these moments of triumph are not the dominant theme in the biography of Jeremiah.

IMPORTANCE OF HIS MINISTRY

Only God knows to what degree the ministry of a man has been a success or a failure. As the world evaluates such things Jeremiah was a failure. No one, it seems, paid any attention to his dire predictions; no one gave heed to his appeals for repentance. He was powerless to stop the suicidal national policy. Yet in a very real way Jeremiah was the hero of the last days of Judah. More than any other single individual he enabled the people to survive the calamity of 586 BC. Philip Schaff has referred to Jeremiah as "the most prominent personage in a period of deepest distress and humiliation of the Jewish theocracy."⁴⁸

A. Interpreting a Disaster: The destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation to Babylon was a severe spiritual as well as political blow to the people of Judah. The religious establishment long had said that such a calamity could not befall the holy city. God would never allow Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed. The notion of the inviolability of Zion seems to have hardened into an unquestioned assumption in Jeremiah's days. It was heresy and blasphemy to challenge this dogma. Those who attempted to refute it did so at the peril of their lives.

When the disaster of 586 BC became a reality the official religious leaders were at a loss to explain how it could have come about. The entire structure of faith in the Lord was dangerously close to toppling to ruins because one dogma—and it false to begin with—had proven to be unsound. Many were questioning the justice of God.⁴⁹ The temptation was strong to render homage to the gods of the conquering Chaldeans. Those who retained their faith were plunged into hopeless despair feeling that God had utterly and completely cast off his people (Ezek

⁴⁸In the preface to the commentary on Jeremiah in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical*, ed. John Peter Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), i.

⁴⁹Jer 31:29; Ezek 18:2, 25; Lam 5:7.

33:10; 37:11). During and shortly after 586 BC the very survival of Israel's faith was hanging in the balance. Without Jeremiah in Palestine to warn of tragedy and Ezekiel to interpret it when it struck, the Israelite people probably would have fared no better than the other peoples conquered by Babylon. That the faith of Israel survived 586 BC is due in no small measure to Jeremiah's preaching.

Herein lies the paradox of Jeremiah's ministry: By preaching judgment he was in fact providing the basis of salvation for his people. Repeatedly Jeremiah emphasized that the destruction of Jerusalem was of the Lord. He underscored that the judgment was just because of the enormous transgression of the people. The desperately confused Jews in 586 BC clung to Jeremiah's words as the only viable explanation of what had happened. Thus Jeremiah was able to fit the tragedy of 586 BC into the framework of faith.

B. Visualizing a Future: Jeremiah made another equally important contribution to the ongoing of his people. This prophet laid the foundations and prepared the way for the new Israel that would one day rise out of the ruins of the old. Jeremiah believed in the indestructibility of Israel (30:11; 29:11). The nation must go into captivity; but the day for return would come after seventy years of servitude to Babylon.⁵⁰ That grand exodus from Babylon would eclipse the memory of the exodus from Egypt (16:14ff.). It would involve a restoration for Israel as well as for Judah (30:10). Replacing the worthless kings who had disgraced the throne of David, God would raise up for them in that day an ideal king, a righteous Branch, the Messiah.⁵¹

Out of the ruins of the old Jerusalem a new city—a spiritual city—would arise which would wear the same name as the king who rules over it (33:11, 16). Replacing the old covenant that had been written upon stone would be a new covenant written upon the tables of the heart—an inward, spiritual, everlasting covenant of pardon and grace.⁵² The old ark of the covenant, symbolic of God's presence, would no longer be needed or even desired in the new age for God himself would dwell in the midst of the people (3:16f.). Through faith and obedience Gentiles would be incorporated into that new Israel.⁵³ These and similar predictions sustained God's people through the agonizing spiritual ordeal of the exile. Because of his messianic predictions Jeremiah is part of the prophetic foundation upon which is reared the new Israel of God.⁵⁴

LEGENDS OF HIS MINISTRY

Considerations of space will not permit a lengthy discussion of Jeremiah's importance in Jewish tradition. Ginzberg in his monumental work, *The Legends of the Jews*⁵⁵ records dozens of legends that grew up about this prophet. Legend would have it that Jeremiah was born circumcised; that he was weeping at his birth and that shortly thereafter he could speak; that the prophet concealed the temple vessels and heavenly fire when Jerusalem fell to the Chaldeans; that Jeremiah and Nebuchadnezzar were friends in their childhood; that one of his prayers caused the crocodiles to disappear; that he entered paradise alive; that he would be one of two witnesses to return to earth in the future. It was probably this last tradition that explains why some Jews thought Jesus was Jeremiah.⁵⁶

⁵⁰Jer 16:18; 25:11, 12.

⁵¹Jer 23:5-6; 30:9.

⁵²Jer 31:33f.; 32:39f.; 33:8.

⁵³Jer 3:17; 16:19; 12:16.

⁵⁴A.F. Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets* (third edition; London: Macmillan, 1923), 325.

⁵⁵Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1938). See index vol., pp. 253-54 for references.

⁵⁶Mt 16:14. *The prophet* in John 1:21, 6:14 and 7:40 is also a reference to Jeremiah.

PART TWO: JEREMIAH: THE BOOK

The Book of Jeremiah in the standard English edition contains fifty-two chs, among the prophets second only to the sixty-six chs of Isaiah. By actual word count Jeremiah is the longest prophetic book in the Bible. This book is not the easiest one to understand and appreciate. As a matter of fact Jeremiah makes extremely difficult reading even for those who might be somewhat more advanced in the area of biblical studies. This book—like the other prophetic books—alludes to persons, situations and events that are unfamiliar to the modern reader. The figures of speech seem often to be crude and inappropriate or obscure. Yet those who pick up this book should realize that they are studying a document that is more than twenty-five hundred years old. Such difficulties are to be expected when one reads any literature from antiquity. If one succeeds, however, in bridging the culture gap between the twentieth century AD and the sixth century BC he will be richly rewarded by what he discovers in the Book of Jeremiah.

WRITING OF THE BOOK

A. Authorship: The heading of the Book of Jeremiah (1:1) claims that the chapters that follow right up to (but not including) ch 52 are the work of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah who lived in the late seventh and early sixth centuries before Christ. With this agrees the statement in 51:64, *Thus far are the words of Jeremiah*. Internal evidence supports the contention of the superscription and subscription of the book. In 36:1-2 Jeremiah is told to record in a scroll his oral messages from the first half of his ministry. When the prophet complied with that command, the first edition of the Book of Jeremiah came into being. Concerning the matter of authorship three questions need probing: What was the role of Baruch in the production of the Book of Jeremiah? Is there any extraneous material in the book? Who is responsible for the historical appendix that is contained in ch 52?

1. *Role of Baruch:* Baruch the son of Neriah is mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah several times. Chronologically his first appearance is in ch 36 where he wrote a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah and then publicly read the document. Jeremiah was commissioned to utter a special oracle pertaining to Baruch in that same year (ch 45). Sixteen years later Baruch again appears as an assistant to Jeremiah when the latter was performing one of the most dramatic action parables of his career (32:12f.). When last mentioned in the book Baruch was accused of influencing Jeremiah to denounce the plans of the remnant to emigrate to Egypt. Subsequently both the prophet and Baruch were forced to accompany the refugees in their flight from Judah (43:3, 6).

Opinions differ as to the extent of Baruch's influence in producing the Book of Jeremiah. On one extreme there are scholars who believe that Baruch was involved only in writing the scroll of 605-604 BC. According to this view Baruch was nothing more than a public scribe employed for a very limited task. On the other extreme are those scholars who believe Baruch on his own initiative published a biography of Jeremiah. Later Baruch combined Jeremiah's work with his own, recasting some of Jeremiah's sermons in his own pedestrian style. Both of these positions regarding to the role of Baruch are unacceptable. The first position—that of Mowinckel—is *a priori* unlikely considering the close

association between Baruch and Jeremiah subsequent to 604 BC. As for the second position, Baruch appears to be too pious and serious a man to have tampered with the speeches of his master.⁵⁷

What then was Baruch's role in the publication of the book? His initial role as the scribe who recorded *verbatim* the sermons dictated to him by Jeremiah is clearly indicated in ch 36. It is quite possible and even probable that in the latter half of his ministry Jeremiah used Baruch in a similar capacity. In Jeremiah's twilight years Baruch probably gathered and edited all of Jeremiah's prophecies. Whatever he did in the way of editing, however, was doubtless at Jeremiah's direction. Even the arrangement of the prophecies may be due to the suggestion of Jeremiah.⁵⁸ Thus Jeremiah is the author of the book that bears his name. Baruch's contribution was purely technical and mechanical.

2. *Alleged non-Jeremian material*: Negative critical scholars do not feel obligated to accept the claims of any OT book regarding its authorship. They believe that they have at their disposal modern "tools" by which they can confidently separate the actual words of Jeremiah from later intrusions. Robert Pfeiffer, for example, believes that the Book of Jeremiah consists of three groups of writings: (1) words dictated or written by Jeremiah himself; (2) biography of the prophet probably written by Baruch; and (3) "miscellaneous contributions from the hands of redactors and later authors."⁵⁹ It is this third category of materials that is most disturbing. How is one to distinguish between the inspired and authentic words of Jeremiah the prophet and the words of redactors and later authors? The critical scholars begin by setting up categories of what they believe a prophet of that period could or would have said. Any verses in the book that do not fall into those categories are declared to be spurious.

Since these critics, for the most part, do not believe in the possibility of long-range, pinpoint predictive prophecy, all such passages can be taken away from the prophet and assigned to some anonymous person who lived after the event that is predicted. According to some of the more radical critics, messianic prophecy prior to the return from captivity in 538 BC is impossible. Therefore all passages predicting the coming of a personal Messiah in the books of Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah and the other pre-exilic prophets must be assigned to some author living after 538 BC. Now this methodology is so ridiculous that one is prone to dismiss it with a shrug. Yet this is the type of scholarship to which young people are exposed in most universities and theological training schools today!

It is not possible nor would it be profitable to deal here with all the disputed passages in Jeremiah. One highly respected introduction to the OT has taken the position that 533 vv—roughly thirty-nine per cent of the book—were written neither by Jeremiah nor by Baruch.⁶⁰ One cannot, of course, find unanimity among the critics as to which specific passages in the book are spurious. Since their methodology is so subjective, agreement among these critics is not to be expected. It will suffice here to note the various categories of passages that the negative critics tend to deny to the prophet Jeremiah.

In general the critics question the following types of passages: (1) Passages which are verbally parallel with those in other OT books; (2) vv which are repetitions from earlier within the Book of Jeremiah; (3) passages which predict doom for Babylon; and (4) messianic prophecies.

3. *Authorship of Jeremiah 52*: The concluding words of ch 51, *Thus far are the words of Jeremiah*, suggest that what follows in ch 52 was not written by the prophet. In spite of this explicit statement some insist that Jeremiah is still to be regarded as the author of the last

⁵⁷E.J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 244.

⁵⁸The view adopted here regarding the role of Baruch is that of E.J. Young, *op. cit.*, 243-45.

⁵⁹Robert Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948), 500.

⁶⁰Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* trans. David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 399-400.

chapter of the book. Their argument goes like this: Jer 52 has been copied from 2 Kgs and Jeremiah wrote 2 Kgs; therefore Jeremiah wrote ch 52.

This argument hinges on two basic assumptions: (1) that the Jewish tradition ascribing the authorship of Kings to Jeremiah is reliable; and (2) that Jer 52 was copied from 2 Kgs. The latter assumption does not appear to be justified because Jer 52 contains information not contained in 2 Kgs.⁶¹ Furthermore certain words are spelled differently in the two sources. While most of these spelling differences are obvious only in the Hebrew at least one is clear in some English versions. In 2 Kgs 24:18 the name of the king of Babylon is spelled Nebuchadnezzar while in Jer 52 the spelling Nebuchadrezzar is used.

The last seven vv of ch 52 seem to require authorship by someone other than Jeremiah. For one thing Jeremiah would have been close to ninety years of age when Jehoiachin was released from Babylonian imprisonment (52:31). While not rendering Jeremian authorship of these vv impossible, this age factor certainly renders it improbable. Furthermore, in these vv the next to the last king of Judah is called Jehoiachin while in the body of the Book of Jeremiah this king goes by the name Coniah⁶² or Jeconiah.⁶³ Finally these last seven verses use the Babylonian or accession year method of computing the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar while in the body of the Book of Jeremiah, in 52:12 and in the Book of Kings the Palestinian system is employed. It would be most difficult to imagine one author using two different dating systems for the same king.

If Jeremiah did not write ch 52, who did? Various suggestions have been made. Most likely Baruch added this chapter and clearly indicated that he was doing so by inserting the editorial note at the end of ch 51. It is possible that ch 52 (or at least most of it) was included at the suggestion of Jeremiah himself.⁶⁴

The position taken here is that the entire work belongs to Jeremiah and his amanuensis, Baruch. The poetic oracles⁶⁵ and prose sermons no doubt were dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch or, in some cases, recorded by Baruch as they were preached. The biographical materials were likely written by Baruch. They were based on his own observations or conversations with Jeremiah. The prophet himself was ultimately responsible for all the material in the book with the possible exception of ch 52.

B. Style of Writing: A careful study of the prophetic books of the OT reveals that each of the inspired authors wrote in his own distinctive style. Much has been written on the style of Jeremiah, some of it complimentary, much of it derogatory. The present writer finds it impossible to make pronouncements on whether Jeremiah's style is good or bad, or whether it is superior or inferior to that of other prophets. Jeremiah is Jeremiah. He has his own distinctive style of writing. His book has influenced profoundly the course of Jewish and Christian thought. Long after the subjective evaluations of literary critics are forgotten the Book of Jeremiah will continue to be studied and appreciated.

That certain sections of the book—e.g., the prose sections—strike modern scholars as stylistically inferior does not mean that his contemporaries regarded them as bad Hebrew. Thus modern students of the book should be very cautious in passing value judgments on the style of this ancient document.

⁶¹See Jer 52:10, 19-23, 28-30.

⁶²Jer 37:1; 22:24, 28.

⁶³Jer 27:20; 28:4; 24:1.

⁶⁴Young, *op. cit.*, 244.

⁶⁵An oracle is a divine utterance which the prophet as the spokesman and messenger of God announces publicly in the name of God. Generally an oracle is introduced by the formula *Thus says the Lord* and concluded by *oracle of the Lord*.

As one reads the Book of Jeremiah he cannot help noticing certain rather prominent stylistic characteristics.

1. *Absence of ornament*: Cheyne describes the style of Jeremiah as one of "unpretending simplicity."⁶⁶ One does not find in Jeremiah the glowing language and vivacity that characterizes the Book of Isaiah; he is not the "artist in words" as was his predecessor. This is not to say that Jeremiah was inferior to Isaiah; such an evaluation would be grossly unfair. The men lived in different ages; they spoke to and wrote for different audiences and, most important, they had different personalities. Jeremiah was preeminently a man of sorrows; perhaps this accounts for his unadorned simplicity. In the desperate times in which he lived flowery oratory would have been entirely out of place. The times called for clear, lucid, direct, concise and easily understood discourse. When placed within the proper historical context, the style of Jeremiah has a beauty of its own.

Perhaps one should not speak of a Jeremian style. Variations of style can be detected within the book. One's style of writing or speaking is determined largely by external factors. Those whose ministry extends over several decades may be shocked in later years to read what was written in their youth. In the case of Jeremiah the earlier oracles display a calmness and uniformity of tone; his later oracles show traces of his personal suffering.

2. *Frequent repetition*: Jeremiah's ministry was quite lengthy and his message throughout was the same. Given these circumstances repetition is to be expected. What modern preacher does not on occasion repeat himself? The repetitions in Jeremiah may be categorized under the following headings:

a. *Figures*: Certain figures of speech are repeated in the book. Among these are the figures of the brazen wall,⁶⁷ the turned back,⁶⁸ fury that burns like fire,⁶⁹ the water of gall,⁷⁰ the incurable wound⁷¹ and rotten figs.⁷² The favorite figure employed by the prophet is that of the travailing woman.⁷³ Another prominent figure is that of carcasses being given over to the fowl of the heavens.⁷⁴

b. *Formulae*: The prophet uses stereotyped formulae throughout the book. He uses the expression *rising up early* at least a dozen times to express the idea of earnestness. Other favorite expressions are: *walking in the stubbornness of the heart* (seven times); *the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride* (four times); *sword, famine, pestilence* (eighteen times); and *fear on every side* (four times).

c. *Verses*: Entire vv are repeated. At least fourteen⁷⁵ examples of such repetition can be observed in the book as the following chart illustrates.

Verse Repetitions in the Book of Jeremiah	
(1) 1:18,19 and 15:20	(9) 11:20 and 20:12
(2) 2:28 and 11:13	(10) 15:2 and 48:11
(3) 5:9,29 and 9:9	(11) 16:14,15 and 23:7,8

⁶⁶Cheyne, op. cit., xiv.

⁶⁷Jer 1:18; 15:20.

⁶⁸Jer 2:27; 7:24; 32:33.

⁶⁹Jer 4:4; 21:12.

⁷⁰Jer 7:14; 9:15; 23:15.

⁷¹Jer 15:18; 30:12.

⁷²Jer 24:8; 29:17.

⁷³Jer 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6.

⁷⁴Jer 7:33; 19:7; 16:4; 34:20.

⁷⁵Several other examples of virtual repetition could be cited, e.g., 15:13-14 and 17:3-4; 4:5 and 8:14; 8:15 and 14:19; and 49:19-21 and 50:44-46.

(4) 6:13-15 and 8:10-12	(12) 17:25 and 22:4
(5) 6:22-24 and 50:41-43	(13) 23:19,20 and 30:23,24
(6) 7:14 and 26:6	(14) 30:11 and 46:28
(7) 7:31-33 and 19:5-7; 32:35	(15) 31:35,36 and 33:25,26
(8) 10:12-16 and 51:15-19	

As to literary form, the repetitions in Jeremiah fall into no clear pattern. Poetic sayings are repeated in similar, or sometimes quite different, connections; the same is true of the prose sayings. The two parts of the doublet may differ in literary form. One may be prose and the other poetry; one may be part of a prose sermon, and the other part of the biographical narrative.

3. *Influence of earlier writers:* Jeremiah was influenced in no small measure by his predecessors. Because he quotes so frequently from other prophets, Jeremiah has been charged with a lack of originality. This man, however, was so saturated with the word of God that he unconsciously used the language of Israel's past spiritual giants. It may even be at times that he deliberately quoted the earlier prophets to vindicate himself by showing a continuity between what he was preaching and what the prophets of God had always preached viz., that idolatry and disobedience to the covenant would lead to national overthrow. Jeremiah, however, never allowed himself to become the slave of another man's style. The imprint of his own personality is upon all of his prophecies.⁷⁶

Jeremiah was especially fond of quoting the two great prophets of the eighth century, Isaiah and Hosea. The influence of Isaiah is clearly present in at least six passages of the book.⁷⁷ Because of the similarities in language and thought, Hosea has been called by one scholar "the Jeremiah of the Northern Kingdom."⁷⁸ A parallel listing of some of the similar passages clearly indicates the influence that Hosea exerted on Jeremiah.

Hosea-Jeremiah Parallels

<p>Hosea 14:1,4 O Israel, return unto the LORD you God for you have fallen by your iniquity. ...I will heal their backsliding...</p> <p>Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to kindness; break up your fallow ground...</p> <p>Hosea 6:10 In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing: there whoredom is found in Ephraim, Israel is defiled.</p>	<p>Jeremiah 3:22 Return, you backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings.</p> <p>Jeremiah 4:3 ...Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.</p> <p>Jeremiah 5:30 an astonishing and horrible thing is come to pass in the land. 18:18 ...the virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing. 23:14 In the prophets of Jerusalem also I have seen a horrible thing: they com- mit</p>
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⁷⁶Clyde T. Francisco, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1950), 142.

⁷⁷Compare Isa 4:2; 11:1 and Jer 23:5,6; 33:15; Isa 13, 47 and Jer 50-51; Isa 15 and Jer 48; Isa 40:19,20 and Jer 10:3-5; Isa 42:16 and Jer 31:9.

⁷⁸Kirkpatrick, op. cit., 117.

<p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 4:2</p> <p>there is nothing but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 14:9</p> <p>Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent that he may know them?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 8:13</p> <p>...but the LORD accepts them not: now will he remember their iniquity and visit their sins...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 9:9</p> <p>...he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 3:5</p> <p>Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hosea 2:23</p> <p>...and I will say to them that were not my people, You are my people; and they shall say, You are my God.</p>	<p>adultery, and walk in lies...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 7:9</p> <p>Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 9:12</p> <p>Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 14:10</p> <p>...therefore the LORD does not accept them; now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 30:9</p> <p>But they shall serve the LORD their god, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 30:22</p> <p>and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.</p>
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4. *Mixture of prose and poetry:* The Book of Jeremiah contains prose and poetry in nearly equal proportions. While the literary critics may be correct in evaluating the poetry of Jeremiah as artistically inferior to that of the eighth century prophets, Jeremiah's poetry is nonetheless outstanding. His poetry combines "pathos with picturesque imagery."⁷⁹ Jeremiah wrote some of the most sympathetic pages of the OT.⁸⁰ Whatever his literary merits or demerits, however, Jeremiah deserves the highest honor for his conscientiousness. Cheyne has correctly observed: "his greatest poem is his life."⁸¹
5. *Numerous figures of speech:* Jeremiah uses numerous images and figures of speech. He is particularly fond of similes drawn from the realm of nature⁸² and from the scenes of everyday life.⁸³ Frequently the figures are only partially developed as the prophet jumps back and forth from figurative to concrete description.⁸⁴
6. *Preoccupation with mourning:* The Weeping Prophet has a great deal to say about mourning and lamentation. In several passages he calls upon others to lament the destruction of the nation⁸⁵ or her *lovers* (22:20). In one passage Jeremiah discourages further weeping over the death of Josiah and instructs the people rather to mourn over the banishment of King Jehohaz (22:10-11). He calls upon the *shepherds* of the nation to

⁷⁹Freedman, op. cit., xxi.

⁸⁰Cheyne, op. cit., xv.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Jer 2:23; 8:7, etc.

⁸³Jer 6:29f.; 18:2ff.

⁸⁴To this point the discussion of the style of Jeremiah has been developed along lines suggested by A. Streane, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Together with Lamentations* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: University Press, 1903), xxviii-xxx.

⁸⁵Jer 4:8; 9:17, 18, 20.

lament the impending slaughter of the flock (25:34). In his oracles concerning Moab and Ammon he rhetorically calls upon these Gentiles to mourn.⁸⁶

Besides these direct exhortations, there are numerous descriptions of and allusions to lamentation in the book. He vividly describes the lamentation and consternation caused by a terrible drought (14:2-3) and the wail of shepherds when their pasture has been destroyed (25:36). He places a lament on the lips of the captives in Babylon (8:19). He visualizes a day when rebellious Israel would return to God with bitter tears of remorse.⁸⁷ Jeremiah refers to the cry of lamentation that would arise over the destruction of foreign nations.⁸⁸

When Jeremiah contemplated the disaster that was about to befall the peoples of Syria-Palestine he was overcome by grief. He mourned bitterly for his own people;⁸⁹ but he shed tears as well for the people of Moab.⁹⁰ This preoccupation with lamentation is one of the unique characteristics of the book. The mind of this prophet "was set on a minor key, and his temper was elegiac."⁹¹

7. *Use of the rhetorical question:* The Book of Jeremiah is filled with rhetorical questions and the use of this device must be regarded as characteristic of the literary and oratorical style of this prophet. At times God uses rhetorical questions in speaking to Jeremiah.⁹² Jeremiah uses this device to rebuke and exhort the people of Judah. At least ten vv in ch 2 alone contain rhetorical questions. Sometimes such questions are placed on the lips of the people.⁹³ Rhetorical questions are also used by Jeremiah in his prayers.⁹⁴
8. *Use of quotations:* Another favorite technique of Jeremiah is the use of quotations. In at least three verses God quotes himself.⁹⁵ Jeremiah frequently quotes the words of the people to whom he was preaching. Such quotations reveal the rebellion,⁹⁶ hypocrisy⁹⁷ and hostility (11:19, 21) of the people of his day. In at least one passage Jeremiah quotes the religious leaders of the nation (14:14). Finally there is what might be called the projected quotation where Jeremiah anticipated what the people will be saying once God's judgment has been poured out upon them.⁹⁸

HISTORY OF THE BOOK

- A. **Early Editions of Jeremiah:** Considering the turbulence of the times it is indeed remarkable that any records written during the early sixth century have survived.⁹⁹ It is nothing short of a miracle of God's providence that men can have access to the writings of this great prophet.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps more is known about the process of producing the Book of Jeremiah than any other OT book. It seems clear from internal evidence that the book went through at least three distinct stages before reaching its present form.

⁸⁶Jer 48:20; 49:3.

⁸⁷Jer 3:21; 31:9; 50:4.

⁸⁸Jer 46:12; 47:2; 48:4-5; 49:21; 50:46.

⁸⁹Jer 4:19-21; 8:18-9:1; 9:10; 10:19; 13:17; 14:17-18.

⁹⁰Jer 48:31-32, 36.

⁹¹Davidson, op. cit., 576.

⁹²Jer 3:6; 7:17; 12:5.

⁹³E.g., 8:19; 13:22; 16:20; 21:13; 22:8.

⁹⁴E.g., 15:18; 18:20.

⁹⁵Jer 7:23; 11:4, 7.

⁹⁶Jer 6:16, 17; 5:12.

⁹⁷Jer 5:2, 7:4, 10.

⁹⁸Jer 5:19; 8:14, 15, 19.

⁹⁹H. T. Kuist, "Jeremiah," *Layman's Bible Commentary* (Richmond: John Knox, 1960), 12-13.

¹⁰⁰C. Paul Gray, "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah," *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1966), 311.

1. *Original roll:* The first edition of the Book of Jeremiah appeared in 604 BC. At the command of the Lord, Jeremiah dictated to his scribe Baruch portions of the sermons he had been preaching for some twenty-three years. Nearly everyone who has written a commentary or introduction to the Book of Jeremiah has attempted to reconstruct the contents of that original document. Such efforts are really futile, virtually amounting to nothing more than guesswork.

The following cautious conclusions about the original roll are based upon what is said about it in ch 36: (1) the scroll contained a selection from or a digest of the sermons of the prophet preached between 627 and 605 BC. It is unlikely that it contained any narratives or reports of incidents in the prophet's life. (2) The sermons in the scroll must have been exclusively or at least primarily of a threatening character. (3) These messages were directed against foreign nations as well as against Judah and Jerusalem. (4) In comparison to the length of the present book the first edition must have been relatively brief. It was read three times in a single day (36:10, 15, 21) with significant intervals between each reading.

The first edition of Jeremiah was utterly destroyed by the tyrant king Jehoiakim but was reproduced in an expanded form that very same year. Besides the material contained in the roll that Jehoiakim destroyed, this second roll contained *many like words* (36:32).

2. *Subsequent editions:* The history of the Book of Jeremiah after 604 BC is obscure. At least one (possibly more) edition of the book preceded the final form of the text as it has been preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Probably an edition of the book was published by Baruch in Egypt after the death of Jeremiah. This Egyptian edition of Jeremiah would have been considerably larger than the scroll that was destroyed and reproduced in 604 BC. It would have contained along with the earlier material all the accounts of the life and ministry of Jeremiah subsequent to 604 BC. These accounts cover the last twenty years of the prophet's ministry. If this edition of Jeremiah contained ch 52—and this appears likely—then a clue is available as to the date of its publication. The Book of Jeremiah closes with the release of King Jehoiachin from Babylonian imprisonment (560 BC). The Egyptian edition of Jeremiah must have been published shortly after this.

When Baruch decided to leave Egypt the Jews there must have made a hasty copy of the Book of Jeremiah to retain in their own possession. Baruch seems to have emigrated to Babylon. There he issued the final, completed form of the Book of Jeremiah. Baruch may have rearranged the material in the Egyptian edition and may have added some new Jeremian material (e.g., 33:14-26). It is this Babylonian edition of Jeremiah that appears in the Hebrew Bible and which has been translated in the standard English versions of the OT. Thus at the time of Baruch's death two editions of the Book of Jeremiah were in circulation, a shorter and incomplete edition in Egypt and the comprehensive and final edition in Babylonia.

B. Problem of the Septuagint: The Greek translation of Jeremiah is peculiar in several respects. It differs from the standard Hebrew Book of Jeremiah in both content and form. To be specific the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX) differs from the Hebrew in at least four ways.

1. *Shorter text:* The Septuagint is about one-eighth shorter than the Hebrew text. This means that about twenty-seven hundred words that are found in the Hebrew text are not represented in the Greek version.¹⁰¹ These omissions range in length from a word or two up to an entire section (e.g., 33:14-26). Most of the omissions in the Greek text are trifling.

¹⁰¹Giesebrecht cited by Bright, op. cit., cxxiii. The Septuagint also adds about one hundred words that are not represented in the Hebrew text.

Some, perhaps many, of them may be attributed to the caprice, ignorance or carelessness of those who translated Jeremiah into Greek.¹⁰² Some of the omissions, however, appear to be systematic and deliberate.¹⁰³ This would suggest that the Septuagint translators had before them a different Hebrew copy of Jeremiah, one that was considerably shorter than the Hebrew copy that has survived. Among the Dead Sea scrolls, texts of Jeremiah were found which support the shorter as well as the longer version of the book.¹⁰⁴

2. *Arrangement of sections:* The Greek version of Jeremiah has a different arrangement of sections within the book. The section of oracles against foreign nations that is placed at the end of the book in the standard Hebrew text (chs 46-51) is placed in the middle of the book in the Septuagint (after 25:13).
3. *Arrangement within sections:* Even *within* the various sections of the book the Greek version sometimes arranges the material in a different order. In the Septuagint the oracles against the foreign nations are not in the same order in which they appear in the Hebrew text. The following chart illustrates the differences between the Hebrew and Greek arrangements of these oracles.

Order of the Oracles Against Foreign Nations				
Pos.	Heb	Ref	Greek	Ref
1	Egypt	Ch. 46	Elam	25:15-20
2	Philistia	Ch. 47	Egypt	Ch. 26
3	Moab	Ch 48	Babylon	Chs. 26-28
4	Ammon	49:1-6	Philistia	29:1-7
5	Edom	49:7-22	Edom	29:7-22
6	Damascus	49:23-27	Ammon	30:1-5
7	Kedar	49:28-33	Kedar	30:6-11
8	Elam	49:34-39	Damascus	30:12-16
9	Babylon	Chs. 50-51	Moab	Ch 31

4. *Missing blocks:* Some blocks of materials (e.g., Jer 33:14-16) that are found in the Hebrew text are absent from the Greek version.

C. Explanation of the Septuagint:

1. *Abbreviated version:* No entirely satisfactory explanation of the differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts of Jeremiah has yet been put forward. This much is clear: The Greek version must have been translated from a Hebrew manuscript that differed markedly from the standard Hebrew manuscripts of the book. Since the Septuagint was translated in Alexandria Egypt, the translators must have used the text of Jeremiah that was most popular in that area. That text would be the hastily copied scroll of Jeremiah that was made when Baruch emigrated to Babylon. This abbreviated form of the Book of Jeremiah became the basis of the Septuagint translation. Some have held that the Septuagint represents a superior text of the book. On the whole, however, the Hebrew text is superior.¹⁰⁵
2. *Superior Hebrew text:* The arrangement of the materials within the Hebrew text is also superior to that of the Septuagint. The Alexandrian translators apparently took great liberty

¹⁰²Naglesbach, op. cit., 14.

¹⁰³For example, doublets are systematically eliminated in their second occurrence.

¹⁰⁴Fohrer, op. cit., 400.

¹⁰⁵Young, op. cit., 250.

in rearranging the materials in what they considered to be a more logical order.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the oracles against foreign nations were inserted in the middle of ch 25 in order to make the Book of Jeremiah conform in structure to the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. In any case the placement of these oracles between 25:13 and 25:15 is quite unnatural. These chapters should certainly have followed and not preceded the enumeration of nations in 25:15-26 to which they refer.¹⁰⁷

The principle followed by the Septuagint translators in revising the order of the oracles against the nations can no longer be determined. Perhaps they were influenced by the political situation of their own day. In the mid-third century when the Book of Jeremiah was translated into Greek the Parthian empire had taken over the ancient territory of Elam. The Parthians had given evidence that they were a power to be reckoned with. Babylonia was one of the major possessions of the Seleucid Empire and Egypt was the center of the powerful Ptolemies. Because of their prestige and political importance Elam, Egypt and Babylon may have been placed first in the list by the Septuagint translators. What principle was followed in arranging the other six oracles is unclear.

Be that as it may the order in the Hebrew text corresponds mostly to that of the nations enumerated in 25:15-26 and has all the marks of originality.¹⁰⁸

C. Canonicity of the Book: The term *canonicity* refers to the recognition of a writing as inspired and authoritative Scripture.

1. *Earliest attestation:* In the case of the Book of Jeremiah such recognition must have come shortly after the publication of the book. History had vindicated the predictions of Jeremiah; no one could question any longer that he was a man of God. The earliest reference to the actual use of the Book of Jeremiah is recorded in Dan 9:2. Just after the fall of Babylon, in the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel was studying Jeremiah's famous seventy years prophecy. It was during his meditation upon this prophecy that Daniel himself received a revelation of the first magnitude, his famous seventy weeks revelation.

The Book of Chronicles, probably compiled and written by Ezra the priest and scribe, furnishes evidence of the second use of Jeremiah. In the closing chapter of Chronicles a reference is made again to the seventy years prophecy (2 Chron 36:21). Thus the Chronicler as well as Daniel recognized that Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord and he made use of the writing of that prophet.

2. *External attestation:* The earliest testimony to the canonicity of Jeremiah outside the OT is found in the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus (49:6-7). Here Ben Sira, the author of this important book, states that the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC was a fulfillment of the predictions of Jeremiah. Ben Sira, then, in ca. 280 BC¹⁰⁹ recognized Jeremiah as a prophet of God. Consequently he must have regarded the Book of Jeremiah as inspired Scripture. Since Ben Sira obviously speaks as a well-educated and pious man, one must conclude that his attitude toward Jeremiah was the attitude prevalent among the Jews of his day.

D. Placement of the Book: Probably every Sunday School child in memorizing the books of the Bible has learned that the five books of Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations,

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷A.B. Davidson, "Jeremiah the Prophet," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (New York: Scribner, 1909), 2:574.

¹⁰⁸Davidson, loc.cit.

¹⁰⁹Ben Sira is usually dated at about 180 bc. However, when all the evidence is sifted a date for the book at 280 bc is certainly possible if not probable.

Ezekiel and Daniel. This arrangement of the books is based upon the ancient Greek OT, the so-called Septuagint version. A Jewish child memorizing the books of the Hebrew Bible learned that the Latter Prophets consists of four books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve. Under this system of counting the Minor Prophets are lumped together as one book. Daniel and Lamentations are not found among the prophets in the Hebrew Bible; they are counted among the so-called *Kethubhim* or Writings.

In both ancient and modern Bibles, in the Hebrew, Greek and English arrangements of OT books, Jeremiah stands alongside Isaiah and Ezekiel. While these three books—Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel—have always stood together, they have not always stood in that order.

Certain evidence exists that the Book of Jeremiah once stood at the head of the Major Prophets. In the Talmud listing of OT books Jeremiah is named immediately after Kings. Furthermore, a large number of Hebrew manuscripts place Jeremiah in the initial position.¹¹⁰

E. Jeremiah in the New Testament: For the Christian, the attitude of Jesus Christ toward the OT is of supreme importance. No one can question that the Lord and His apostles regarded the Book of Jeremiah as inspired Scripture and an integral part of that group of sacred writings known collectively as the OT. There are, according to one estimate, ninety-six allusions in the NT to the Book of Jeremiah.¹¹¹ Four passages from Jeremiah are directly quoted in the NT.

1. *Matthew 2:17:* Commenting on the death of the Bethlehem innocents, Matthew quoted Jer 31:15. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not* (Mt 2:17).
2. *Matthew 21:13:* When Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple He quoted with an authoritative formula Jer 7:11. *And He said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of robbers* (Mt 21:13).¹¹²
3. *1 Corinthians 1:31:* Using the same formula, *it is written* the Apostle Paul gives an interpretive quotation or paraphrase of Jer 9:24: *He that glories, let him glory in the Lord* (1 Cor 1:31).
4. *Hebrews:* The writer of Hebrews quotes at length from Jer 31:31-34 and attributes the words of directly to God.¹¹³ Here is the inspired interpretation of the important New Covenant passage in Jeremiah.
5. *Disputed passage:* In one passage Matthew quotes Zech 11:12-13 and attributes the quotation to Jeremiah the prophet. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me* (Mt 27:9-10). Many different solutions have been proposed for this difficulty. Some think that a scribe has inserted the name of Jeremiah into the Matthew passage. Others think that Jeremiah spoke the words here attributed to him and then they were subsequently written down by Zechariah. However the simplest solution is that Matthew is quoting a section of the OT rather than a book. Jeremiah originally stood

¹¹⁰H.E. Ryle, *The Canon Of the Old Testament* (second edition; London: Macmillan, 1895), 237.

¹¹¹United Bible Society Greek NT. The Nestle Greek New Testament lists fifty-five allusions. More than thirty of the allusions are in the Book of Revelation.

¹¹²Also found in Mk 11:17 and Lk 19:46.

¹¹³Jer Heb 8:8-10; 10:16, 17.

first among the prophetic books. What Matthew meant was that the relevant passage was found in that section of the OT that had Jeremiah at its head.¹¹⁴

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

A. Types of Literature: Four basic types of material are to be found in the Book of Jeremiah: poetic sayings, the confessions, biographical prose, and prose discourses. The four types of literature are found commingled through the various parts of the book. Even though the recognition of these literary types is not a key to the arrangement of Jeremiah it is nonetheless a useful tool in understanding the book.

1. *Poetic sayings:* The greater part of the poetry in Jeremiah belongs to the first literary type, the poetic saying or prophetic oracle. Most of the material found in the pre-exilic prophetic books falls into this category. In this type of utterance the prophet speaks as the mouthpiece of the Lord. He uses throughout the first person, but the *I* is the Lord, not the prophet. Such an oracle is usually introduced by a formula such as *Thus says the Lord* or *Hear the word of the Lord*. These oracles come from all periods of the prophet's public ministry with the heaviest incidence coming in the reign of King Jehoiakim.
2. *Confessions.* The second type of literature in Jeremiah is virtually unique in prophetic books. It is called by some autobiography; by others, documents of self-revelation; by still others "the confessions." Here the prophet lays bare his most intimate feelings. In these passages Jeremiah uses the first person, but the *I* is not the Lord; it is the prophet himself. It is most difficult to imagine that these lines of self-revelation were ever publicly spoken. At some state of writing—probably in the second edition of the book—these verses were skillfully interwoven with the oracles of judgment against Judah. Jeremiah records for subsequent generations his thundering denunciations and threats of destruction. At the same time he reveals the personal agony that he experienced all the while he was publicly preaching doom. The material which falls into the second literary type may be further subdivided into (1) the confessions or complaints,¹¹⁵ and (2) the laments.¹¹⁶
3. *Prose discourse.* The third type of literature in the book is the prose discourse. Most of the passages in this category begin with God addressing Jeremiah and giving him directions what he is to say and do.¹¹⁷ Sometimes the introductory address has been omitted and only the prose sermon remains.¹¹⁸ The prose discourse is found in all parts of the book and is often intermingled with the poetic material. Some twenty-five percent of the content of the book falls into this category.
4. *Biography.* Biography constitutes the fourth category of literature in the Book of Jeremiah. While other prophetic books contain snatches of this type of material, large blocks of such material are found in this book. This narrative material refers to Jeremiah in the third person. The individual sections of this material are usually introduced by precise chronological data¹¹⁹ though sometimes such data are omitted (e.g., 14:1-20:6). Often the biographical material serves to provide a framework for one of Jeremiah's prose sermons. Some critics believe that the creator of this material, the "Biographer" as he is sometimes

¹¹⁴During the course of his debate with the atheist Robert Owen, an anonymous questioner submitted in writing a number of questions to Alexander Campbell among which was one question pertaining to the quote here under discussion. Campbell's answer on that occasion was essentially the same as the answer here proposed. See *The Evidences of Christianity* (Cincinnati: Standard, n.d.), 359-60.

¹¹⁵Jer 11:18-12:6; 15:10f., 15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13, 14-18.

¹¹⁶E.g., Jer 4:19-21; 5:3-5; 8:18-9:1.

¹¹⁷E.g., Jer 7:2, 16, 27f.; 11:1-17; 16:1-13; 18:1-12; 19:1-13.

¹¹⁸E.g., Jer 16:14-18; 31:27-34; 38:17; ch 33).

¹¹⁹E.g., Jer 26:1; 38:1; 36:1.

called, lived several generations after the time of Jeremiah.¹²⁰ However it is more likely that Baruch is responsible for recording and preserving this material probably at the direction and possibly the dictation of Jeremiah himself.¹²¹

B. Arrangement of the Material: One of the most difficult problems facing the student of Jeremiah is the arrangement of the materials within the book. Francisco regards the arrangement of the book as the most confused in the OT.¹²²

1. *Non-chronological.* That the book is not chronologically arranged can be seen in the following chart that indicates the various time notices in the book. Eleven of these notices are explicit as to the particular year of a king's reign; the rest mention events that can be dated precisely by other means.

Chronological Notices in Jeremiah			
Josiah	Jehoiakim	Zedekiah	Post-Fall
1:2 (25:3)			
3:6			
		21:1-2	
	22:18		
		24:1,8	
	25:1		
	26:1		
		27:3,12	
		28:1	
		29:3	
		32:1	
		34:2	
	35:1		
	36:1,9		
		37:1,3	
		38:5	
		39:1,2	
			40:1
			43:7,8
			44:1
	45:1		
		49:34	
		51:59	

At times the Book of Jeremiah is chronological (chs 37-44) and at times it is topical (chs 46-51). Chs 1-6 seem to be in sequence; but from ch 7 on, no systematic pattern can be observed. Even a superficial reading of the book reveals that materials from widely different periods of Jeremiah's life have been placed side by side. The undated material presents still another problem. Where do these chapters fit chronologically in the ministry of the prophet? Scholars do not agree how the Book of Jeremiah reached its present form.¹²³

¹²⁰H.G. May, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 61 (1942), 139-55.

¹²¹John Bright (op. cit., lxvii) has pointed out that the biographical accounts cover the period from 609 (ch 26) to the end of Jeremiah's career. Baruch is known to have been the secretary of Jeremiah from at least 605 bc (chs 36, 45) until after 586 bc (43:3).

¹²²Francisco, op. cit., 145.

¹²³Gray, op. cit., 311.

2. *Payne's theory.* Constructive work on the arrangement of the materials in the book has been done by J. Barton Payne.¹²⁴ He believes that the book is arranged topically and that it grew with each of the three or four successive editions that preceded the final comprehensive scroll. As Jeremiah continued to preach he added to the writings that ultimately made up the book that bears his name. Payne takes each of the chronologically displaced units in the book and offers an explanation both as to the time and the reason that unit was placed in its present position.

Payne believes that both the original scroll and the scroll reproduced in 604 BC were arranged chronologically. When the third edition of the book was produced in Egypt, however, certain logical or topical supplements were inserted at various places in the document. Certainly the arrangement of the material as it stands was suitable for the purpose of the book. That purpose was to lead God's people to repentance and to reconciliation with him (36:3, 7).

3. *Proposed outline.* Any attempt to outline the Book of Jeremiah in detail must result only in an approximate division of the text. While the broad divisions of the book are evident, wide disagreement exists how the material is arranged within those portions of the book. The main divisions of the Book of Jeremiah come at the end of chs. 1, 25, 45, and 51.

Ch. 1 is introductory to the entire Book of Jeremiah. It contains an account of the prophet's call and a summary of his prophetic activity in prospect.

Chs. 2-25 are for the most part a collection of Jeremiah's oracles or prophecies down to 605 BC (25:1). This broad statement must, however, be qualified by noting that some biographical material is found in these chapters as well as some material (e.g., 21:1-10) which must be dated after 605 BC. Chs 2-25 are mainly poetical, mainly oracular, mainly national, and for this reason Robert Pfeiffer designates this division of the book as *the words of Jeremiah*. Most of the material in this division of the book was dictated to Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, in 605 BC when the Lord commanded the prophet to commit his words to writing.

Chs 26-45 contain primarily biographical material relating to the ministry of Jeremiah after 605 BC. Again some qualification of this generalization is necessary. Excerpts from some of Jeremiah's sermons are found in this section as is some material dating before 605 BC (e.g., ch 26). This section, which is mainly prose, has been called by Pfeiffer "the biography of Jeremiah." The materials here were likely compiled by Baruch.

Chs 46-51 are prophecies against foreign nations that were written at various times during the ministry of Jeremiah. Perhaps at one time this section of Jeremiah circulated separately. In the Septuagint version this whole section is placed after 25:13.

Ch 52 is an appendix added to the Book of Jeremiah apparently to show how some of the prophecies of Jeremiah were fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of many Jews. Others see the purpose of this ch as a kind of introduction to the Book of Lamentations that seems at one time to have been a part of the Book of Jeremiah. Ch 52 ends on a note of hope with the account of Jehoiachin's release (560 BC).

The following chart summarizes these conclusions regarding the arrangement of the book.

Structure of the Book of Jeremiah
Introduction
Call and Commission
Ch. 1

¹²⁴"The Arrangement of Jeremiah's Prophecies," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 7 (Fall, 1964), 120-130.

Chs. 2-25	Chs. 26-51
Mainly prior to 605	Mainly after 605
Mainly National	Mainly Personal
Mainly Oracles	Mainly Narratives
Mainly Poetry	Mainly Prose
The Words of	The Biography of
Jeremiah	Jeremiah
Dictated by Jeremiah	Compiled by Baruch
Oracles Against Foreign Nations	
Chs. 46-51	
Historical Appendix	
Ch. 52	

JEREMIAH GLOSSARY

This glossary is divided into two parts. In Part One all the important persons who are named in the Book of Jeremiah are identified. Part Two is devoted to places and peoples mentioned by Jeremiah. All references are to the Book of Jeremiah unless otherwise indicated. Code: **A** = allusion to an earlier historical figure; **D** = a deity; **F** = a friend or one who was sympathetic to Jeremiah; **K** = a king; **P** = priest or prophet.

Part One PERSONAL NAMES

ABRAHAM: Most famous of the patriarchs and progenitor of the Hebrews. Cited by Jeremiah as one with whom God previously had been faithful in keeping a covenant (33:26). **A**

AHAB: Immoral and lying prophet in Babylon. Jeremiah predicted Nebuchadnezzar would roast him in the fire (29:21-23). **P**

AHIKAM: The son of Shaphan the scribe who protected Jeremiah when priests and false prophets wanted his death (26:24). **F**

AMON: Sun god, and for many centuries the chief god, of the Egyptians. The greatest Egyptian temple was constructed for Amon at No (Thebes). Jeremiah predicted Amon would be discredited by Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt (46:25). **D**

APIS: The sacred bull, one of the high gods of Egypt. The word is translated "valiant men" in KJV and "strong ones" in ASV. **D**

ASHERAH: A Canaanite mother-goddess associated with Baal. The term also applies to the wooden images which represented this goddess (17:2). **D**

ASA: King of Judah three hundred years before the time of Jeremiah. He was the builder of a cistern into which Ishmael threw the corpses of the men he had slain (41:9). **A**

AZARIAH: Probably the brother of Jezaniah (42:1). Acted as spokesman for the remnant of Jews who rejected the word of God given through Jeremiah that they should not flee to Egypt.

BAAL: The Hebrew word means "master" or "possessor"; the name of the Canaanite fertility deity which the Jews began to worship in Palestine. It was this apostasy toward which Jeremiah aimed much of his

prophecy. There are twelve references to Baal in Jeremiah. **D**

BAALIS: King of the Ammonites who plotted the death of Gedaliah, governor of Judah (40:14). **K**

BARUCH: Friend and scribe to whom Jeremiah dictated his prophecies in 605-604 BC (36:4; 36:32; 45:1). Baruch was placed in charge of the prophet's purchase of a field at Anathoth (32:13). Considered by some to have been Jeremiah's biographer and editor. **F**

BEL: Bel-Merodach (Marduk), chief god of Babylon (50:2). **D**

CHEMOSH: National god of the Moabites who would be carried off into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (48:7). **D**

CONIAH: (22:24, 28; 37:1) See **JEHOIACHIN**.

DAVID: Second king of Judah whose dynasty still ruled in Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day. The terminology "throne or David" occurs seven times in the book. The Messiah would come from the house of David (23:5; 30:9; 33:15). Jeremiah emphasizes the eternity of the covenant made with David (33:17, 21, 22, 26). **A**

DELAIAH: One of the princes who urged Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies (36:12, 25). **F**

EBED-MELECH: An Ethiopian eunuch in the court of Zedekiah who rescued Jeremiah from a pit in which he had been left to die (38:7-13). Because of this act of faith and courage, Jeremiah directed a favorable oracle to him (39:15-18). **F**

ELASAH: A member of king Zedekiah's embassy to Babylon who carried Jeremiah's letter to the exiled Jews (29:3). **F**

ELISHAMA: A prince and scribe in the reign of King Jehoiakim in whose office Jeremiah's scroll was placed for safekeeping (36:12, 20, 21). **F**

ELNATHAN: A prince sent by King Jehoiakim to Egypt in pursuit of Uriah the prophet (26:22). Later, one of the princes who urged the king not to burn Jeremiah's scroll (36:12, 25). **F**

EPHAI: Inhabitant of Netophah near Bethlehem whose sons recognized Gedaliah as governor and accepted his protection (40:8).

ESAU: Ancestor of the Edomites, and hence a name applied to the country of Edom (49:8, 10). **A**

EVIL-MERODACH: Biblical name of Amel-Marduk, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar who released Jehoiachin from prison in 561 BC (52:31). **K**

GEDALIAH (1): The son of Ahikam who was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Jeremiah was committed to his care (39:14). After a brief governorship Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael (chs 40-41). **F**

GEDALIAH (2): The son of Pashur. One of four princes who received Zedekiah's permission to cast Jeremiah into a cistern to die (38:1).

GEMARIAH (1): The son of Hilkiah. A member of King Zedekiah's embassy to Babylon who carried Jeremiah's letter to the Jews exiled there (29:3). **F**

GEMARIAH (2): The son of Shaphan who occupied a chamber in the temple where he and other officials heard Baruch read Jeremiah's prophecies. He joined others in urging king Jehoiakim not to burn the prophet's writings (36:10, 12, 25). **F**

HAMUTAL: Wife of King Josiah and mother of kings Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31) and Zedekiah (52:1).

HANAMEL: Cousin of Jeremiah who sold him a field in Anathoth (32:7-12). **F**

HANAN: The *man of God* whose sons (or disciples) had a chamber in the temple (35:4).

HANANIAH: A false prophet from Gibeon who contradicted and insulted Jeremiah on the matter of Babylonian domination. For these sins he died two months later (ch 28). **P**

HEZEKIAH: Good king of Judah (715-686 BC) who heeded the prophet Micah's warnings and instituted reforms (26:18). **A**

HOPHRA: A Pharaoh of Egypt. Jeremiah predicted he would be killed by his enemies (44:39; 44:30). The succeeding Pharaoh had him strangled in 560 BC (37:13). **K**

IRIJAH: A captain of the guard who arrested Jeremiah as he attempted to go to Benjamin during the lull in the siege of Jerusalem. He falsely charged Jeremiah with desertion to the enemy (37:13).

ISHMAEL: Member of the royal family who murdered Gedaliah, governor of Judah, and escaped with eight men to the king of Ammon, taking several hostages with him (chs 40-41).

ISSAC: Ancestor of the Jews (33:26). **A**

JAAZANIAH: A Rechabite whose obedience to his ancestor, who had lived two hundred years before, was contrasted with Israel's disobedience to God (chap. 35). **F**

JACOB: Ancestor of the Jews (33:26). Fifteen times in Jeremiah *Jacob* becomes a designation for the descendants of Jacob i.e., the Israelites. **A**

JECONIAH: Son of King Jehoiakim (24:1). See **JEHOIACHIN**.

JEHOAHAZ: The throne name of Shallum, the son and successor of Josiah. After a reign of three months, he was deposed by Pharaoh Neco and deported to Egypt where he died (22:11). **K**

JEHOIACHIN: Throne name of Coniah or Jeconiah (22:24, 28; 37:1). He reigned for 3 months after the death of his father Jehoiakim, before he was carried off to Babylon with his family and 10,000 Jews in 597 BC (24:1). After thirty-seven years of captivity, he was released by Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil-Merodach (52:31). **K**

JEHOIADA: A chief priest in Jerusalem during the early part of Jeremiah's ministry who was displaced by Zephaniah (29:26). **P**

JEHOIAKIM: The son of Josiah who was placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Neco to replace his brother Jehoahaz. During his eleven-year reign (609-598 BC) the reforms of Josiah were forgotten and replaced by personal luxury, extortion, and idolatry. After Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt in 605 BC, he became a Babylonian vassal. He destroyed the first edition of the Book of Jeremiah (ch 36). Jeremiah predicted he would die in disgrace (22:13-23). **K**

JEHUCAL: A prince of Judah who conveyed Zedekiah's request that Jeremiah pray for him. Later one of the group that had Jeremiah thrown into a pit to die (37:3; 38:1-6). The name is also spelled **JUCAL**.

JEHUDI (1): The son of Nethaniah who was sent by the princes to summon Baruch to read Jeremiah's scroll (36:14).

JEHUDI (2): Possibly the same as JEHUDI (1). He was dispatched by King Jehoiakim to fetch Jeremiah's scroll and then was ordered to read it in the presence of the king (36:21).

JERAHMEEL: The officer sent by King Jehoiakim to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah. He was probably of royal blood (36:26).

JEREMIAH: He was born in Anathoth into a priestly family, and consecrated before his birth to be a prophet. He prophesied under kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, and even after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. His message was of God's judgment on an apostate people and a new covenant for the future.

JEZANIAH: A commander of Judean forces who paid respects to Gedaliah the governor of Judah. After Gedaliah's death he joined others in leading the remnant of Jews to Egypt. He appears to have been the brother of Azariah (40:8; 42:1).

JOHANAN: A commander of forces who respected Gedaliah as governor of Judah and warned him of impending assassination. After Gedaliah was slain, he led forces against the murderer, Ishmael. Johanan then joined others in leading the remnant of Jews into Egypt against Jeremiah's advice (chs 40-43).

JONADAB: The ancestor of the Rechabites who required his clan never to build houses, farm, nor drink wine (35:6-19). **A**

JONATHAN (1): The scribe whose house served as prison for Jeremiah (37:15).

JONATHAN (2): The son of Kareah and the brother of Johanan. He is listed among those who submitted to Gedaliah's government and protection (40:8).

JOSIAH: King of Judah when Jeremiah began his ministry. He initiated reforms early in his reign that reached a climax after a law book was discovered during his eighteenth year. This led to widespread external cleansing of the land from idolatry. He was killed in battle against Pharaoh Neco in 609 BC and was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz (1:2; 3:6). **K**

JUCAL: See **JEHUCAL**.

MAASEIAH: A doorkeeper of one of the three gates to the temple (35:4).

MAGOR MISSABIB: This ominous name meaning *terror around* was given to the priest Pashur by Jeremiah after the prophet had been released from the stocks (20:3). See **PASHUR (1)**.

MANASSEH: His reign was the longest (695-642 BC) and most wicked of any king of Judah. He defiled the temple and promoted Baal worship. But after a captivity in Babylon he repented and tried to undo the evil he had done. Jeremiah, however, said that the judgment was inevitable because of the sins of Manasseh (15:4). **A**

MERODACH: Biblical name of Marduk, chief god of Babylon (50:2). **D**

MICAH: The prophet from the town of Moresheth-gath who lived a hundred years before Jeremiah. His negative prophecy against Jerusalem was cited as part of Jeremiah's defense when he was on trial for his life (26:18). **A**

MICAHIAH: The man who heard Baruch reading from Jeremiah's scroll and who reported to the council of princes the contents of that scroll (36:11-13). **F**

MOLECH: The national deity of the Ammonites who was worshiped by means of child sacrifice (32:35). Jeremiah sternly condemned this practice (7:29-34). The name is also spelled Milcom or Malcom.

MOSES: Referred to by Jeremiah as one of the greatest intercessors in the history of the nation (15:1). **A**

NEBO-SARSEKIM: One of the Babylonian officers of the provisional government in Jerusalem. Rab-saris was the title of his office (39:3). NASB takes the "Nebo" or "nebu" to be the concluding element of the previous name in the verse, viz., Samgar-nebu.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Ruler of the Babylonian empire from 605 BC to 562 BC. He destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and four times carried Jewish people captive to Babylon. He is called *my servant* in Jeremiah's prophecies because God used him as an instrument of punishment for the apostate Jews. **K**

NEBUZARADAN: The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard who was in charge of the final destruction of Jerusalem. He freed Jeremiah and treated him kindly (39:9-13; 52:12-30). **F**

NECO: Also spelled Neco. The Egyptian Pharaoh defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC (46:2). Four years earlier Neco had slain Josiah at the pass of Megiddo. **K**

NERGAL-SHAREZER: Also spelled Nergal-sarezer. An official of the provisional government of

Jerusalem after the destruction of 586 BC. Rab-mag is the title of his high office. Possibly he was the same Nergal-sharezer who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar's son on the throne of Babylon in 560 BC (39:3).

PASHUR (1): The son of Immer. A chief officer in the temple who had Jeremiah scourged and imprisoned. Later Jeremiah prophesied that Pashur would die in captivity because he prophesied falsely, and changed his name to Magor-missabib (20:1-6). **P**

PASHUR (2): The son of Maluhiah who was sent by King Zedekiah to Jeremiah to seek a word from God when Nebuchadnezzar's forces began their attack on Judah (21:1). Later he joined other princes in seeking Jeremiah's death (38:1-3).

QUEEN OF HEAVEN: Probably to be identified with the goddess Astarte or Ashtoreth. She was worshiped by the Jews both in Judah (7:18) and in Egypt (44:17-19, 25). **D**

RACHEL: Wife of the patriarch Jacob who was regarded as the mother of Israel. She is represented as weeping over those who are going into captivity (31:15). **A**

SAMGAR NEBO: A name found in KJV of 39:3. Spelled Samgar-nebu in NASB. NIV takes *Samgar* to refer to the town of the previous person and attaches *Nebo* to the following name.

SAMUEL: Referred to as one of the greatest intercessors in the history of Israel (15:1). **A**

SAR-SECHIM: A name found in the KJV of 39:3. Spelled Sarsekim in NASB. See Nebo-Sarsekim.

SERAIHAH (1): The chief priest at the time of Jerusalem's capture who was killed by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (52:24). **P**

SERAIHAH (2): The son of Azriel who was ordered by King Jehoiakim to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch (36:23).

SERAIHAH (3): The son of Neriah who was chief chamberlain for Zedekiah's trip to meet Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah gave him a scroll to read aloud in Babylon and then sink in the Euphrates (51:59). **F**

SERAIHAH (4): The son of Tanhumeth who is listed among those who came to Gedaliah recognizing him as governor and accepting his protection (40:8).

SHALLUM: Son of Josiah (22:11). See **JEHO-AHAZ**.

SHAPHAN: The scribe who read the book of the law to Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8-14). Also father of Ahikam, Gemariah, Jaazaniah, and grandfather of Gedaliah (26:24; 36:10; 40:5). His family befriended Jeremiah on several occasions. **A**

SHEMAIAH: A false prophet in Babylon who promised captive Jews that their exile would be short. Jeremiah prophesied he would die before the return and leave no posterity (29:24-32). **P**

SIHON: An Amorite king who had conquered Moab sometime before the Israelites emerged from their wilderness wanderings. Jeremiah alludes to this conquest in his oracle against Moab (48:45). **A**

SOLOMON: Third king of Israel during whose reign the temple was built. Nebuchadnezzar carried off the bronze that Solomon had used in constructing various parts of the temple furnishings (52:20). **A**

URIAH: Prophet who prophesied against Judah as did Jeremiah, and who was executed by King Jehoiakim (26:20-24). He was from the village of Kireath-jearim. **P**

ZEDEKIAH (1): The son of Josiah who ruled as last king of Judah (597-586 BC). Because of his rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. Zedekiah was taken captive, blinded and deported to Babylon. During the last days before the fall of Jerusalem, Zedekiah had several interviews with Jeremiah (21:1-14; 34:2-7; 37:3-10; 37:16-21; 38:14-28). **K**

ZEDEKIAH (2): The son of Maaseiah. Jeremiah threatened that Nebuchadnezzar would roast this immoral and lying prophet in a fire (29:21-23). **P**

ZEDEKIAH (3): The son of Hananiah. A prince in the reign of King Jehoiakim who was present at Baruch's reading of Jeremiah's scroll in the chamber of Elisha the scribe (36:12).

ZEPHANIAH: The second priest, under the high priest Seraiah, who was sent by King Zedekiah to inquire of Jeremiah (21:1; 37:3). This priest, who seems to have been somewhat favorably inclined toward Jeremiah (29:25, 29), was killed by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (52:24). **P**

Part Two PLACE NAMES

ABARIM: The mountain range SE of the Dead Sea in which Mt. Nebo was one of the prominent peaks. People in this region would lament when the Babylonians attacked (22:20).

AI: A city of Ammon (location unknown) that was to be laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar (49:3).

AMMON: A country NE of Moab and E of the tribe of Reuben, between the Arnon and Jabbock rivers. The children of Ammon are among those God will judge by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (9:26; 25:21) but in the messianic age they would be converted to true faith (49:6).

ANATHOTH: A village three miles NE of Jerusalem. The hometown of Jeremiah (1:1; 29:27). The doom of certain men of Anathoth is announced because they plotted against Jeremiah (11:21, 23). During the siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah purchased a field in Anathoth as a sign that lands would again be bought and sold (32:7-9).

ARABAH: The valley of the Jordan River toward which King Zedekiah fled when Jerusalem was under attack (39:4).

ARABIA: A general name for the region between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The kings of Arabia will be forced to drink the cup of God's wrath (25:24).

ARAM, ARAMEANS: The region N of Canaan of which Damascus was a leading city. Nebuchadnezzar sent Arameans (Syrians) to harass the Judean countryside until he could arrive with the army to destroy Jerusalem (35:11).

ARARAT: A district in Armenia, between the Araxes River and lakes Van and Urmia. One of the areas from which God would summon peoples to attack Babylon (51:27).

ARNON: The deep river gorge that was the southern boundary of Reuben but which in Jeremiah's day was within the territory of Moab. It is possible there was a Moabite town of this name (48:20).

AROER: A Moabite city just N of the Arnon River. Its inhabitants will interrogate the fugitives from the N as they flee from the destroyer (48:19).

ARPAD: A fortified city about ninety-five miles N of Hamath in Aram (Syria) that is said to melt in fear at the reported advances of Nebuchadnezzar (49:23).

ASHDOD: One of the five chief Philistine cities. In Jeremiah's day only a remnant survived in this town and the prophet predicts that they must further drink the cup of God's wrath (25:20).

ASHKELON: Philistine city (25:20) that Jeremiah predicted would be attacked by the enemy from the north.

ASHKENAZ: A tribe located in the neighborhood of Armenia, along with the kingdom of Ararat and Minni. They are summoned to attack Babylon (51:27).

ASSYRIA: A narrow country in the upper Tigris valley which ruled the world from about 745-605 BC. In the days of Ahaz, Judah turned to Assyria for aid (2:18), but was bitterly disappointed (2:36). Assyria *devoured* Judah for a number of years (50:17) but was finally punished by God (50:18).

AZEKAH: A village of Judah ten miles SW of Jerusalem. One of the last outposts to fall to Nebuchadnezzar before he attacked Jerusalem (34:7).

BABYLON: The great world power of the sixth century before Christ and the capital of that empire. The Judean captives were taken to Babylon (20:4). Jeremiah also predicts the eventual fall of this empire (chs 50-51). There are 168 direct references to Babylon in Jeremiah.

BASHAN: A region E of Jordan extending from Gilead on the S to Mt. Hermon on the N. Bashan is bidden to weep because of the approach of Nebuchadnezzar (22:20). Following exile, Israel would again possess this region (50:19).

BENJAMIN: The territory just N of Jerusalem. Jeremiah lived in this region (1:1) and purchased a field here from a relative (32:8). He was arrested trying to go to the land of Benjamin during the lull in the siege of Jerusalem (37:12). He addresses the children of Benjamin in one oracle (6:1) and alludes to the land of Benjamin in two others (17:26; 33:13).

BETH-DIBLATHAIM: A city of Moab the location of which is uncertain (48:22).

BETHEL: Twelve miles N of Jerusalem. A seat of one of the golden calves. In the day of judgment the inhabitants of Moab will be ashamed of their god Chemosh just as Israel was ashamed of the illegitimate worship at Bethel when that nation was being judged (48:13).

BETH-GAMUL: A city of Moab about ten miles W of Dibon (48:23).

BETH-HAKKEREM: Spelled Beth-haccerem in KJV. Thought to be a hill east of Bethlehem. Jeremiah urged the Judean fugitives to set up a signpost there to guide others in their flight to the wilderness (6:1).

BETHLEHEM: Near this famous town 6 miles S of Jerusalem the remnant camped on their flight to Egypt after the assassination of Gedaliah (41:17).

BETH-MEON: A Moabite city the location of which is uncertain (48:23).

BETH-SHEMESH: The name literally means *the house of the sun*. An Egyptian city called On by the Egyptians and Heliopolis by the Greeks. Located about ten miles NE of modern Cairo and a few miles S of ancient Tahpanhes. Jeremiah predicts that the obelisks of the sun temple there would be broken down (43:13).

BOZRAH (1): Chief city of northern Edom over which Nebuchadnezzar would spread his wings (49:22) making the place a desolation (44:13).

BOZRAH (2): A city in the plains of Moab. It was destined to fall to Nebuchadnezzar (44:24).

BUZ: A tribe in northern Arabia descended from Nahor, Abraham's brother, which must drink the cup of God's wrath (25:23).

CARMEL: The prominent mountain on the W coast of Canaan that stands as a wall between the maritime plain of Sharon on the S and the more inland plain of Esdraelon on the W. Carmel is used by Jeremiah as a symbol of that which is beautiful (2:7) and lofty (46:18). In the restoration Carmel will again be possessed by Israel (50:19).

CHALDEA, CHALDEANS In Jeremiah's day Chaldea was synonymous with Babylonia. Forty-six references are made to this land and people in Jeremiah.

CUSH: The Hebrew name for Ethiopia. Ebed-melech the Ethiopian once rescued Jeremiah (38:7-13). The prophet referred to Ethiopians in a sermon illustration (13:23). Some of Pharaoh's mercenary troops came from Cush (46:9).

CYPRUS: See **KITTIM**.

DAMASCUS: Capital of the kingdom of Aram (Syria) the destruction of which Jeremiah predicts (49:23, 24, 27).

DAN: The northern-most city of Canaan. Indications of the invasion from the north would first come from Dan (4:15, 8:16).

DEDAN: One of the Arab tribes that must drink of the divine cup of wrath (25:23). The Dedanites inhabited the region S of Edom. Jeremiah urges them to withdraw further into the desert so that they might not have to experience the fate of Edom (49:8).

DIBON: A Moabite city located about four miles N of the Arnon River. The important King's Highway passed

through this place. Dibon will experience disgrace in the day of Moab's judgment (48:18, 22).

EDOM: A mountainous region between Moab and the Red Sea. In addition to several allusions to the impending destruction of Edom, Jeremiah composed a lengthy oracle against this land (49:7-22). The prophet directed the Edomite ambassador to take a symbolic yoke to this king (27:3). Many Jews fled to Edom when the Chaldeans attacked Judah in 588-86 BC (40:11).

EGLATH-SHELISHIYAH: A Moabite city the location of which is unknown (48:34). The name means *a heifer of three years old* and is so translated in KJV.

EGYPT: The great power on the NW corner of the continent of Africa. There are fifty-three references to Egypt in Jeremiah. Several passages refer to the Exodus from Egypt (11:7; 16:14; 23:7; etc.). After the assassination of Gedaliah the Judean fugitives fled to Egypt (chs 41-44). Jeremiah predicts the defeat of Egypt at Carchemish (46:1-6) as well as an invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (46:13).

EKRON: One of the chief Philistine cities. Ekron will have to drink the cup of divine wrath (25:20).

ELAM: In addition to the brief allusion to the destruction of Elam in 25:25, Jeremiah wrote an oracle against this land (49:34-39). Nebuchadnezzar campaigned against Elam in 596 BC.

ELEALEH: A Moabite city located about a mile N of Heshbon (48:34).

EPHRAIM: The name of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The prophet alludes to the captivity of Ephraim (7:15) and the restoration of Ephraim (31:9, 18, 20).

ETHIOPIA, ETHIOPIANS: See **CUSH**.

EUPHRATES: The most prominent river of the Near East that flows from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian Gulf. Often called in the Bible *the river* or simply *River* (2:18). Jeremiah buried and subsequently retrieved a linen girdle from the banks of the river (ch 13). The battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates is mentioned both historically (46:2) and prophetically (46:6, 10). A scroll containing an oracle against Babylon was ordered sunk by Jeremiah in the Euphrates (57:63).

GAREB: A hill near Jerusalem listed as marking the boundaries of the new Jerusalem (31:39).

GAZA: A Philistine city. Jeremiah mentions an otherwise unrecorded Egyptian attack on Gaza (47:1) and also predicts that this city will suffer at the hands of the enemy from the north (47:5).

GERUTH-CHIMHAM: NIV spells Geruth Kimham. *Inn of Chimham* in KJV. A rest area for travelers near Bethlehem. The remnant camped here as they fled to Egypt following the assassination of Gedaliah (41:17).

GIBEON: A city of Judah six miles NW of Jerusalem. The home of the false prophet Hananiah (28:1). At Gibeon Johanan caught up with Ishmael and effected the rescue of the captives which the latter had taken from Mizpah (41:12, 16).

GILEAD: A mountainous region E of Jordan famous for its trees (22:6) and the medicines produced by those trees (8:22, 46:11). Jeremiah predicts that Jews will return from captivity to occupy the mountains of Gilead (50:19).

GOAH: A place on the E of Jerusalem near the hill Gareb. One of the boundary marks of the new Jerusalem (31:39).

GOMORRAH: See **SODOM**.

HAMATH: A city and region in upper Syria in the valley of the Orontes River. The city is said to melt in fear at the news of the Chaldean advance. The town of Riblah in the region of Hamath was the military headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar (39:5; 52:9, 27; 49:23).

HAZOR: An Arabian city, region, or tribe smitten by Nebuchadnezzar (49:28, 30, 33).

HESHBON: Formerly a Levitical city belonging to the tribe of Reuben. Heshbon was the major city N of the Arnon River in Jeremiah's day (49:3). The city is mentioned four times in the Moab oracle (48:2, 34, 45) as being the spot from which the destroyer of Moab would launch his attack.

HINNOM, VALLEY OF: A valley on the W side of Jerusalem where child sacrifice was practiced in worship of the god Molech (7:31; 32:35). Jeremiah changed its name to Valley of Slaughter (7:32; 19:6) because of the corpses that would fall there. Overlooking this valley Jeremiah once preached and performed a symbolic act (19:2).

HOLON: A Moabite city the location of which is unknown (48:21).

HORONAIM: A Moabite village just S of the Arnon river which Jeremiah predicts will be sacked and destroyed by the enemy (48:3, 5, 34).

ISRAEL: There are 105 references to Israel in Jeremiah and three references in Lamentations. *Israel* sometimes refers to the entire theocratic nation which the

Lord brought out of Egypt. In other passages *Israel* is the Northern Kingdom that ceased to exist in 722 BC. Frequently in the book, God is called *the God of Israel*.

JAHZAH: A Moabite city about eight miles SE of Heshbon (48:21, 34). KJV spells Jahazah.

JAZER An Ammonite city fifteen miles N of Heshbon. The bitter lament of this city is mentioned by Jeremiah (48:32).

JERUSALEM: The capital of Judah and site of the temple. The city is mentioned 108 times in Jeremiah and seven times in Lamentations. The main thrust in these books is on the destruction of Jerusalem, although Jeremiah does mention the restoration of the city (31:38-40).

JORDAN: The major river of Canaan flowing from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. In three passages Jeremiah speaks of the *Pride* (KJV *swelling*) of the Jordan. This refers to the thick jungle-like vegetation that grew along the river (12:5; 49:19; 50:44).

JUDAH: The tiny nation in S Canaan to which Jeremiah preached. There are 176 references to Judah in Jeremiah and five in Lamentations.

KEDAR: Sometimes used of Arabia in general (2:10) and sometimes of a particular tribe living in Arabia (49:28). The tribe of Kedar was to be attacked by Nebuchadnezzar.

KERIOOTH: A Moabite city eleven miles SE of Dibon. Jeremiah predicted it would be taken by Nebuchadnezzar (48:24, 41).

KIDRON: A brook running through the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Mentioned by Jeremiah as one of the boundaries of the restored city of Jerusalem (31:40).

KIR-HERES: The chief fortress of southern Moab the fall of which indicates the completion of Moab's destruction. Jeremiah wept over the fall of this city (48:31, 36). Also spelled Kir-hareseth, Kir-haraseth and Kir-haresh.

KIRIATHAIM: A Moabite city about eight miles NW of Dibon (48:1, 23).

KIRJATH-JEARIM: A village eight miles W of Jerusalem. The home of the faithful prophet Uriah (26:20).

KITTIM: The isles of the Mediterranean and perhaps the coastlands of Italy and Greece. Jeremiah challenged his audience to see if they could discover in Kittim an

example of unfaithfulness that would parallel the apostasy of Judah (2:10).

LACHISH A Judean city about 28 miles SW of Jerusalem. One of the last outposts to fall to Nebuchadnezzar before he began the siege of Jerusalem (34:7).

LEBANON: The mountain range which, commencing near Tyre, runs NE through Syria, nearly parallel to the seacoast, sometimes as high as 9000 feet above sea level. Jeremiah mentions the snows of Lebanon as an illustration of constancy (18:14). The palace of the king of Judah is called Lebanon (22:6), as is the city of Jerusalem (22:23). Lebanon is the first region to suffer from the Babylonian invasion (22:20).

LEB-KAMAI: A cryptic designation for Babylon which when decoded spells *Chaldeans* in Hebrew. Lebkamai literally means *the heart of those who rise up against me* (51:1).

LIBYANS: See **PUT**.

LUHITH: A village of Moab between Ar and Zoar at the S extremity of the Dead Sea (48:5).

MADMEN: A village in Moab nine miles N of Kir-hareseth whose destruction was foretold by Jeremiah (48:2).

MEDIA, MEDES: The kings of Media are named among those who must drink the cup of God's wrath (25:25). Jeremiah predicted it would be the Medes that would attack and destroy Babylon (51:11, 28).

MEMPHIS: Moph or Noph in Hebrew. A city in central Egypt on the W of the Nile River. It was a royal residence in days of Jeremiah. A major city (2:16; 46:14) where the Jewish remnant settled (44:1). Jeremiah predicted the city would be waste and desolate (46:19).

MERATHAIM: A symbolic name for Babylon meaning *double rebellion* (50:21).

MIGDOL: A fortress on the NE border of Egypt where some of the Jewish remnant settled (44:1; 46:14).

MINNI: A district near Ararat in the region later known as Armenia from which God would summon troops to attack Babylon (51:27).

MISGAB: NASB and NIV render *the stronghold*. The name means *high fortress* and this spot seems to have been located in the vicinity of Nebo (48:1).

MIZPAH A city of Judah about nine miles NE of Jerusalem where Gedaliah set up the seat of government after the destruction of Jerusalem (chs 40-41).

MOAB: Generally in OT times Moab occupied the region E of the Dead Sea between the Brook Zered in the S and the Arnon River in the N. In Jeremiah's day the Moabites seem to have expanded beyond the Arnon. Jeremiah makes a point of the fact that the Moabites practice circumcision (9:26). Moab must drink the cup of wrath (25:21) and submit to the yoke of Babylon (27:3). Jews fled to Moab in the war of 586 BC (40:11). In a lengthy oracle Jeremiah predicts the overthrow of Moab (ch 48).

NEBO: A Moabite city about five miles SW of Heshbon (48:1, 22).

NEGEV: A barren steppe S of the valley of Beer-sheba. Sometimes the word is simply rendered *south*. Jeremiah predicted the siege of the cities of this region (13:19) and ultimate restoration of them following the captivity (32:44; 33:13). See also 17:26.

NOPH: See **MEMPHIS**.

PATHROS: The entire region of Upper (southern) Egypt where some of the Jewish remnant settled (44:1, 15).

PEKOD: A symbolic name for Babylon meaning *punishment* (50:21).

NILE The mighty river whose annual flooding brought prosperity to the land of Egypt. Jeremiah compared the advance of the Egyptian army to the swelling of the Nile (46:7, 8).

NIMRIM, WATER OF: A small brook in Moab that flows into the S end of the Dead Sea (48:34).

NO: See **THEBES**.

PHILISTIA, PHILISTINE: The coastal region of Palestine. It is about forty miles long. Jeremiah named the kings of the Philistines among those who would be forced to drink the cup of God's wrath (25:20). A brief oracle against the Philistines is found in ch 47.

PUT: The Hebrew name for the Libyan region W of Egypt. The Libyans were mercenaries in the army of Pharaoh (46:9).

RABBAH: Also spelled Rabbath. The major city of Ammon which today is called Amman and is the capital of Jordan. This city fell, as predicted by Jeremiah (49:2-3), to Nebuchadnezzar in 582-81 BC.

RAMAH: A city of Benjamin about five miles N of Jerusalem. Rachel's weeping over her sons was heard as far as Ramah (31:15). The Babylonians took Jeremiah to Ramah in chains (40:1).

RED SEA: The sound of the cry of Edom is heard as far as the Red Sea, southern border of that land (49:21).

RIBLAH: A city of Aram (Syria) on the Orontes River. This was the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar on his 586 BC campaign against the Jews. Here Zedekiah was brought after his capture (39:5-6; 52:9) and here the leaders of Judah were executed (52:10, 26-27).

SAMARIA: Capital of the Northern Kingdom that was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC. Some pilgrims from the vicinity of Samaria were massacred by Ishmael as they made their way to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice (41:5). Jeremiah also pointed out a contrast between the prophets of Samaria and those of Jerusalem (23:13).

SHEBA: A region in SW Arabia about 1500 miles S of Jerusalem from which the Jews secured the ingredients for incense and anointing oil (6:20).

SHEPHELAH: The rolling hills which separate the mountains of Judah from the coastal plains. This region of Judah is mentioned three times by the prophet (17:26; 32:44; 33:13). Translated *lowland* in KJV.

SHESHACH: A cryptic name for Babylon used in 25:26 and 51:41.

SHILOH: A city of Ephraim N of Bethel where the tabernacle was located during the period of the Judges. Jeremiah used the destruction of Shiloh as an illustration of what God would do to Jerusalem (7:12, 14; 26:6, 9). Some pilgrims who lived in the vicinity of the ruins of Shiloh were massacred by Ishmael (41:5).

SIBHAM: A village of Moab about three miles SW of Heshbon. Famous for its vineyards (48:32).

SIDON: A Phoenician city about twenty-seven miles N of Tyre. Sidon must drink the cup of God's wrath (25:22) and submit to the yoke of Babylon (27:3). In the day of national judgment Sidon will be without foreign help (47:4).

SODOM: One of four cities—Gomorraah, Admah, and Zeboim being the others—located on the S shores of the Dead Sea that was destroyed in the days of Abraham. Jeremiah used the infamous wickedness of these cities as a basis of comparison for the wickedness of Judah (23:14) and the permanent overthrow of these cities to illustrate the permanent desolation of Edom (49:18) and Babylon (50:40).

SYRIA, SYRIANS. See **ARAM.**

TABOR: An isolated mountain in the midst of the plains of Jezreel. Used by Jeremiah as a symbol of loftiness (46:18).

TAHPANHES: A city in Egypt on the Nile near Pelusium, on the S extremity of Palestine. Called by the classical writers Daphne. A royal residence was located here in Jeremiah's day (43:9) and hence the city can symbolically stand for the entire land of Egypt (2:16). Jeremiah preached to those of the remnant who settled in the city (43:7-9; 44:1; 46:14).

TARSHISH: Generally thought to be located on the SW coast of Spain. A source of silver used to manufacture idols (10:9).

TEKOA: A village six miles SE of Bethlehem. Jeremiah urges that a trumpet be blown in Tekoa to assemble the refugees on their flight to the wilderness (6:1).

TEMA: An Arab tribe living S of Edom named among those that must partake of the cup of wrath (25:23).

TEMAN: A region in or at the NE of Edom. The Temanites were famous for their wisdom (49:7), but this wisdom will not avert the impending destruction of Edom (49:20).

THEBES: Also called No or No Amon. Located in southern or Upper Egypt. The greatest collection of monuments and ruins in the world is to be found there. Jeremiah predicted that God's wrath would be poured out on Amon the god of No (46:25).

TOPHETH: The word is used eight times in Jeremiah. Topheth is thought to be the pit in which human victims were burned in the valley of Hinnom (7:31). Topheth would be defiled by the slaughter that would befall Judah and corpses would be buried there (7:32; 19:6, 11). The entire city of Jerusalem would be defiled like Topheth (19:12-14).

TYRE: The most prominent city of Phoenicia. Tyre must drink the cup of divine wrath (25:22) and submit to the yoke of Babylon (27:3). In the day of judgment all helpers of Tyre would be cut off (47:4).

UPHAZ: A distant land from which the idolaters of Judah secured gold to be used in the manufacture of idols (10:9). The location is uncertain but is thought to be E of Canaan. Some identify Uphaz with Ophir.

UZ: A region in close proximity to Edom (Lam 4:21) whose kings must drink the cup of divine wrath (25:20).

ZIDON: See **SIDON**.

ZIMRI: A people whose location is unknown. They are mentioned among those who must drink the cup of divine wrath (25:25).

ZION: In Jeremiah, Zion is synonymous with Jerusalem. In prophetic passages, Zion becomes a designation for the church of Christ (31:6, 12). The term is used 17 times in Jeremiah and 16 times in Lamentations.

ZOAR: The city at the SE corner of the Dead Sea into which Lot and his daughters fled. In the days of Jeremiah Zoar was the southernmost city of Moab (48:34).