

Life And Times of Jeremiah

by
Andrew Connally

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Fall of Israel
2. March Against Judah

I. TIMES PRIOR TO JEREMIAH

1. Hezekiah
2. Manassah
3. Amon
4. Josiah
5. Summary

II. TIMES OF JEREMIAH

1. Josiah
2. Jehoahaz
3. Jehoiakim
4. Jehoiachim
5. Zedekiah

CONCLUSION

1. Fall of Judah
2. Her Final State

LIFE AND TIMES OF JEREMIAH

During the reign of Isaiah "the fortress ceased from Ephraim".¹ A three year struggle had finally ended, which had been begun by Shalmaneser, an Assyrian king. With the fall of Israel in 722 B.C., Sargon, their current ruling Assyrian king, carried many of the children of Israel captive to Assyria.²

Soon after this victory for Assyria, she marched against Judah in the south to take Jerusalem. Sennacherib was leading the army until it was destroyed outside the gates of Jerusalem.³ After this miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign (714 B.C.), Judah had relatively little to fear from Assyria.⁴

The fall of Israel and the sparing of Judah was a reflection of the obedience and disobedience of the two tribes to the wishes of God. The deliverance of the little tribe of Judah by a miracle from Jehovah testifies to their ability to stand against all invaders had they remained faithful to God. This faithfulness and return from heathen idolatry was prompted by Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz. But this reform was short lived and not complete.

Under Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, the heathen element among the people broke out anew and fostered such idolatry as had never been witnessed before in Judah. Under Manassah the altars and idols of Baal were restored. He erected altars to the hosts of heaven and erected an image of Asherah in the house of the Lord. He was a follower of Maloch, in general then, he caused Israel to sin greatly.⁵

1. Isaiah 17:3

2. I.S.B.E., Vol. 1, Pg. 571

3. 2 Chro. 32

4. Kiel and Delitzsch, Jer. Vol. 1, Pg. 1

5. Keil and Delitzsch, Jer. Vol. 1, Pg. 3-4

As punishment for his sins God brought Assyria against Judah and carried Manasseh into captivity in Babylon. While suffering the results of his own sin Manasseh sought and obtained forgiveness at the hand of Jehovah. God restored him to Jerusalem and then Manasseh took away the foreign gods and sought to establish the word of Jehovah.⁶

Amon reigned in the place of his father, Manasseh. He also did that which was evil in the sight of God and was soon destroyed. Under such a flux, how could people retain their moral and spiritual strength?

Josiah was next brought to the throne and did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. He sought after the God of David his father. He purged Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry and repaired the house of Jehovah, his God. During this work was found the "book of the law of Moses given by Jehovah." It is little wonder such conditions of idolatry should prevail when God's word had been lost.

This brings us to Jeremiah's time, so let us summarize before looking at his own time. There has been internal disorder after the fall of Israel when Manassah had been carried to Babylon. Yet during Josiah's reign peace has reigned supreme. The religious conditions have been one of unrest since the days of Alraz and his introduction of idolatry. Even after Josiah's reform "as many as are thy cities, so many are thy gods, Judah; and as many as are the streets in Jerusalem, so many altars have ye made to shame, to burn incense to Baal."⁷

Now let us look specifically to Jeremiah's life and times. We shall divide it into the period of the Kings that ruled and notice the conditions of each.

6. 2 Chro. 33:10-12.

7. Jer. 2:28, 11:13.

As Josiah was in power when Jeremiah began his work we shall notice him in further detail than before. Jeremiah began his work in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign.⁸ The people were roughly divided into two classes. One, the group of idolators who had settled on their lees, that say in their hear, 'Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil.'⁹ Over against this group was the remnant which had seen the wrath of God and were willing to stand against all innovations.¹⁰ The finding of "the book of the law" caused great reflections and aspirations on the part of Josiah. He realized the degree of corruption to which all had sunk when he heard the law read in his presence. The reform that followed was based upon the great zeal of Josiah which went to great lengths to accomplish his purpose. The disaster at Megiddo was proof enough to show the reforms had been more of an outward nature than inward. Pharaoh-necoh, Egyptian monarch, was on his way to Mesopotamia to secure control and was met at Megiddo by Josiah and his men. At the first onset Josiah was killed and his expedition was brought to nothing. This was a sore calamity in view of what had been accomplished by Josiah.¹¹

Jehoahaz came to fill the place of Josiah and did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. Pharaoh-necoh had him bound and transported to Egypt. In his place Pharaoh-necoh placed Eliakim whose name be changed to Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim was a vassal of Pharaoh-necoh and then subjected to the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar when they had routed Pharaoh's army at Car-chemish in 605 B.C. Jehoiakim was rash and given to acts of poor judgement which showed his true nature. He erected costly buildings with forced and

8. Jer. 1:2

9. Zeph. 1:12

10. Zeph. 2:3

11. I.S.B.E. Vol. 3. Pg. 1753

unpaid labor.¹² As for religion he let things go pretty much as they had. It seems that the reformed temple worship under Josiah had become a matter of form, which the King made conspicuous by his absence.¹³ His murder of Uriah for his prophesying,¹⁴ and the impious act of destroying the roll of Jeremiah,¹⁵ testify to his unholy character. "His eyes and heart was set on nothing but gain and innocent blood and how to shed it, and oppression and on violence, to do it."¹⁶ After three years of vassalage Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. During this period Jehoiakim slept with his fathers and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Jehoiachin reigned in his fathers stead and followed in the evil ways of his father. After three months of battle Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was carried to Babylon where after thirty-seven years a prisoner, he died. When Jehoiachin was deported the treasures of Jerusalem and many of the nobles of the city followed. In Jehoiachin's place as King was placed Zedekiah the brother of Jehoiakim.¹⁷

The last King of Judah, Zedekiah, reigned eleven years, from 597 to 586 B.C. and was carried captive to Babylon.¹⁸ Zedekiah followed in the steps of his predecessors and like Jehoiachin rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar in the ninth year of his reign. Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and after a year and a half a breach was made in the walls of Jerusalem and the King and his army fled by the way of the Arabah. Zedekiah was captured and taken to Babylon. There he witnessed the execution of his sons and his own eyes were

12. Jer. 22:13-17

13. Jer. 26, 36

14. Jer. 26:20-23

15. Jer. 36:23

16. Keil and Delitzsch, Page 5.

17. 2 Kings 24:6-17

18. I.S.B.E. Vol. 5. Pg. 3141

put out. Zedekiah's character was one of inconsistency during the sieze of the city. He allowed Jeremiah to suffer imprisonment, yet called for him to prophesy time and again. Zedekiah's position was one of difficulty, but he had not the wisdom or courage to meet the demands of the hour.

Nebuchadnezzar having taken away Jehoiachim with all the men of weight had hoped to bring this people to the point of humble submission. Yet it remained for Jehovah to fulfill his oath and forever break this people as a nation. "So Judah was carried away captive out of his land."¹⁷

By way of summary let us notice what we have seen. Since the fall of Israel and the prophecies of Isaiah, Judah had been warned by words of the prophets and oath of God that if she did not heed the commandments of Jehovah she would fall as did her sister, Israel in the north. God's wrath was deterred by Judah's able leadership under Hezekiah. But her prosperity was short lived when Manasseh came to the throne and re-established the idol gods that had been destroyed by Hezekiah. Judah was made to feel the wrath of God as Assyria carried Manassah captive to Babylon. Upon the repentance of Manassah, Jehovah dealt kindly with Judah and Manassah was restored to his throne. Amon followed and he also did evil before God. But when Josiah came to power a reform was enacted which did much to prolong the life of Judah as a nation. During this period, at the death of Josiah, Judah was made subject to Pharaoh-necoh of Egypt which rapidly was transferred to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jehoiakim was made vassal of Nebuchadnezzar to rule Judah. Things went along in a normal way until Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon. Jehoiachim his son filled the throne and was carried captive to

17. Jer. 52:27

Babylon after the rebellion had been put down. Zedekiah, the successor and final King of Judah was carried away captive after his rebellion to Nebuchadnezzar's authority. The city of Jerusalem was sacked and Judah was carried into the seventy years of Babylonian captivity which had begun with Jehoiakim's subjection in the fourth year of his reign.¹⁸ The poorest of the people were left as "vinedressers and husbandmen," over which Gedaliah was appointed governor in the Chaldean interest. After three months of such rule Gedaliah was murdered and the people, in fear of Chaldean vengeance, fled into Egypt where they remained throughout the entire Chaldean domination of the land.¹⁹

Judah, as a result of her own wickedness, had been scattered throughout the heathen lands. The land which had been her possession had been given to another. The city of the most High God lay in ruins. The temple of the Lord was burned to shambles and God's own possession had become a scorn and division among the nations. Such were the life and times of Jeremiah.

18. Keil and Delitzsch, Ibid., pg. 8.

19. Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eiselen, Frederick Carl. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament.
Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern,
Vol. 1:298-300.

Kiel and Delitzsch. Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary.
Grand Rapids: W.M.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950.
Vol. 1:1-10

Orr, James. International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia.
Grand Rapids: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949.
Vol. 1:571, Vol. 3:1753, Vol. 5:3141.

Young, Edward J. Introduction to the Old Testament
Grand Rapids: W.M.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.
Chapter on Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

ORACLES IN JOSIAH'S REIGN

CHAPTER	SUBJECT
1.	The call of Jeremiah
2.	The unnaturalness of Israel's sin
3.	A plea for Judah's return
4.	A plea for Judah's return
5.	A fruitless search for a righteous man
7.	Sermon about the temple
8.	The unnaturalness of Israel's sin
9.	Hopeless tears
10.	False gods
11.	A plot in Anathoth
12.	A plot in Anathoth

ORACLES IN JEHOIACHIM'S REIGN

22.	Jehoahaz and Josiah
26.	A temple sermon
13.	Ruined waistcoat; Filled jars; Leopard spots.
14.	The drought
15.	Moses & Samuel could not save
16.	Jeremiah's lonely life
17.	The wicked & the righteous
18.	The potter & the clay
19.	The broken bottle
20.	Jeremiah beaten by Pashur
46.	Oracles against Egypt
47.	Oracles against Philistia
48.	Oracles against Moab
49.	Oracles against surrounding nations
36.	The scrolls burned

45. Baruch's worries

35. The Rechabites

ORACLES IN ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN

24. Two baskets of figs

27. The yoke

28. Encounter with false prophets

29. Encounter with false prophets

23. Encounter with false prophets

50. Babylon to fall

6. Opponents of Jeremiah

SEIGE OF JERUSALEM

34. City of fall; Freed slaves

21. The two ways

37. Egypt cannot save

38. Jeremiah throw into well

36. Jeremiah imprisoned

32. The field in Anathoth

31. Restoration

30. David King

33. David King

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

39. Ebedmelech saved

52 4,600 deported

AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

40. Jeremiah freed

41. Gedaliah murdered

42. Shall we go to Egypt

43. Flight to Egypt

44. Last fight against idolatry