

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Jeremiah 1 - 52*

The Book of Jeremiah is the second in the Prophetic Series and part of the Major Prophets. It is a series of “oracles” transcribed by his scribe Baruch and written over a period of 50 or more years during the reign of three kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah: Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah.

The author is the prophet Jeremiah, which means “Yahweh establishes” or “throws/lays a foundation,” with the assistance of his servant and companion, Baruch. The book was likely assembled from the notes of Baruch at some point after the final exile.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

650 - 582 B.C.

Jeremiah's prophetic years

641-609 B.C.

Josiah reigns 31 years as King over Judah, the Southern Kingdom

609 B.C.

Josiah killed by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt

609 B.C.

Jehoahaz becomes king of Southern Kingdom

609 B.C.

Pharaoh Neco imprisons Jehoahaz and appoints Jehoiakim

598 B.C.

Jehoiachin becomes king

598-597 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon defeats Egypt

597 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar appoints Zedekiah as king in Jerusalem

TRIP PLANNER:

Jeremiah has been divided into three oracles or writings:

Book 1: Chapters 2-25

Decries Israel's faithlessness, calls people to repentance, warnings of God's impending judgment, and bold sermons about the spiritual complacency of the people.

Book 2: Chapters 30-31

Jeremiah prophesies that the destruction of Israel will not be permanent, and offers hope and restoration and a new covenant not written on tablets of stone. Here, God promises a new relationship with His people.

Book 3: Chapters 46-51

This section deals with oracles against the surrounding nations – and particularly the fall of the kingdom of Babylon.

In between each “book” are personal glimpses into Jeremiah's life, affirming the validity of his role as God's prophet, and his emotional, graphic, and sometimes bizarre illustrations of the message God was speaking through him.

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Judah - The remnant of the tribes of Israel known as the Southern Kingdom. Jerusalem was the capital city.

Jerusalem - Capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, also known as the city of David, and focal point of Jeremiah's prophecy.

Anathoth - Birthplace and home of Jeremiah. Because of his unpopularity due to his prophecies, he was forced to move to Jerusalem, and of no teacher did the saying prove truer that “a prophet has no honor in his own country.”

Assyrian Empire - Captured the Northern Kingdom and took them to live in exile in Nineveh, the capital. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C., and the Assyrian army was defeated in 609 B.C. at Haran.

Egypt - Attempted to expand its presence into Palestine with Assyria's troubles, so joined forces with Assyria to fight the Babylonians at Haran. Josiah tried to stop Egypt's advance, and was killed in that battle. Ruled Judah for a brief period before Nebuchadnezzar routed them and laid siege to Jerusalem.

Babylonian Empire - Under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, fully conquered the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. They devastated the city of Jerusalem, looted and burned the original Temple of God built by Solomon, and took the people captive into exile in Babylon.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Jeremiah – A Benjamite, son of the priest Hilkiah. His first message from the Lord came during Josiah's 13th year as king. His second prophecy was given by the Lord during Jehoiakim's reign; and a third at the end of Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem. Known as the "weeping prophet," his messages were gloom and doom for the kingdom of Judah. He foresaw the imminent and total destruction of Jerusalem, but also foretold of the return from exile. Zedekiah labeled him a traitor and placed him in detention until the destruction of Jerusalem. He remained in Jerusalem after the destruction of the city, but was taken to Egypt by the remnant Jews who refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah died in Egypt, reportedly stoned to death by his own countrymen.

Baruch - Jeremiah used a scribe named Baruch, the son of Neriah, to write down his dictation.

Josiah – Good king of Judah. Became king at the age of 8 and ruled for 31 years. Implemented religious reforms within the kingdom, reinstated Passover, and destroyed false gods and high places. Killed during battle against Pharaoh Necho. Jeremiah was about 20 years old when he received his first message from the Lord, at the time when Josiah was about 21. It appears they were contemporaries and friends, as Josiah offered protection to Jeremiah.

Pharaoh Necho – Ruler of Egypt who attempted to align with Assyria to defeat Babylon. When Judah tried to stop him, he killed Josiah the king, and ruled over Judah for a short time.

Jehoahaz– Assumed the throne of Judah for three months until imprisoned by Pharaoh Necho; his brother, Jehoiakim, became king.

Jehoiakim – Persecuted Jeremiah and rejected his message. When Jeremiah was forbidden to enter the temple precinct, he sent Baruch as his spokesman to give prophecies which he dictated to him. King Jehoiakim destroyed Jeremiah's dictated prophecies.

Jehoiachin – Reigned only three months as king in Judah when Nebuchadnezzar placed Jerusalem under siege, captured Jehoiachin, and led the first group of nobles, officials, and temple treasures into exile. He was held in prison 37 years until Nebuchadnezzar died and the new king, Evil-Merodach (Amel Marduk), released him and allowed him to live in the palace with him the rest of his life.

Zedekiah - Allowed the nobles to arrest Jeremiah as a traitor urging the nation to submit to Babylon. Zedekiah was also fearful of Jeremiah because of the fulfillment of his past prediction of the Chaldean invasion of 598, so he rescued him and kept him safely hidden until the fall of Jerusalem. At the end of his reign, the remaining Jews were carried into exile and the city was burned.

Gedaliah - Appointed as governor over the poorest of the poor remaining in the land of Judah. Gedaliah was assassinated because the people did not want to serve the king of Babylon. Then all the people left the area and went to Egypt.

Nebuchadnezzar - Oldest son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldean Empire. After serving as commander of the army, Nebuchadnezzar became king upon his father's death. By marrying the daughter of Cyaxares, he united the Median and Babylonian dynasties. He wasn't just a warlord, he was also skilled in politics. God used Nebuchadnezzar to mete out His judgment on His people for their wickedness.

FUN FACTS:

Jeremiah's call - Jeremiah's call came in about 627 B.C., in the 13th year of the reign of the young King Josiah, and in the same year that Assyria's last great king, Ashurbanipal, died leading to the establishment of an independent Babylonian state which would grow to overtake Judah.

Contemporaries -

Ezekiel was among the second group of Jews to be deported to Babylon into exile.

Daniel was one of the young leaders taken captive during the first exile under King Nebuchadnezzar.

Micah is mentioned in the book of Jeremiah as a prophet of God.

A Parable - Jeremiah 18:1-23 contains the familiar parable of the potter and the clay.

Prophecies and Types - There are 28 prophecies and types in Jeremiah that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His Church.