

Babylon's 70 Years - The Prophet Jeremiah: 19

(0:00 - 7:52)

In this class we continue to search for, attempt to identify content from the original scroll of Jeremiah which was destroyed by Yehudi and King Jehoiakim in 605 BCE. In the last class we talked about how Jeremiah chapter 30 and 31 which comprise what is identified as a scroll of Jeremiah culminating in the New Covenant. So I proposed that those two passages, those two chapters 30 and 31 of Jeremiah were very likely part of that original Jeremiah scroll.

In this particular class we're going to search for another part of Jeremiah's original work within our present book of Jeremiah. And along the way we're going to talk about Babylon's 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah later talked about by the prophet Daniel. But could we have missed something? So we're going to take a look at Jeremiah's 70 year prophecy in context.

In 604 BCE on a cold wintery night the original Jeremiah scroll was cut with the scribe's razor piece by piece and fed three to four columns at a time into the flame. The court officials and King Jehoiakim showed no fear but rather anger at the words of the scroll that was read before them. Specifically words of a threat.

A threat that the king of Babylon will bo yavo in Hebrew, coming, he will come and destroy this land and cause to cease in it both man and animal. Now we know that this is the reason that Jehoiakim destroyed the scroll of Jeremiah and we know that because there's a word of the Lord that's recorded in the present book of Jeremiah that says exactly that. But the question becomes which word of the Lord among all the prophecies of Jeremiah can we point and say that is what angered Jehoiakim so much? Does it exist in the present book of Jeremiah? Because there's no exact model at least not as it's recorded in Jeremiah chapter 36 verse 29.

There it records the words that angered Jehoiakim but we don't find those words in those in that particular form anywhere in the present book of Jeremiah. Now we have to remember that while we know that the scroll containing these words that so angered Jehoiakim was destroyed we know that scroll was destroyed but we also know according to the text of our present Jeremiah that the very scroll that was destroyed the same words that were on that scroll were put on another scroll at the charge of the Lord. So God tells Jeremiah write another scroll and put the same words that were on the scroll that was destroyed put the same words on a new scroll and this is exactly what we read Jeremiah did.

In Jeremiah chapter 36 verse 32 it says then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe the son of Neriah who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire and many similar words were added to them. So the original Jeremiah scroll according to Jeremiah 36 28 in Hebrew was called the word in Hebrew means the rolled thing or the scroll and is the first. So it's referred to as the first scroll of Jeremiah in verse 28 of chapter 36 and we actually know some things about the scroll we're going to get to the question of what precisely was contained within the scroll we know it was destroyed we know another one was supposedly written with the same words on it and more added but we can find out some of the things that the says were actually contained within the scroll but we'll start with what we know for

certain what we know for certain according to the text of our present Jeremiah is we know when it was written.

It was written in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the fourth year of Jehoiakim. So that puts us at 605 BCE so we know actually a year in which it was written based on the text of Jeremiah chapter 36 verse 1 and 4 in Jeremiah chapter 45. So that's one thing we can say for certain.

Number two we know a time frame for the prophecies contained within the original scroll. We know that the prophecies contained within the first scroll of Jeremiah covered a period from the 13th year of Josiah which is 627 BCE until the fourth year of Jehoiakim which is 605 BCE. So we're talking about a 23 year period that contained or the scroll contained prophecies that were given over a 23 year period.

We get an idea also of the general idea of the nature of the contents of this scroll. We know that the contents of this scroll were words spoken by God to Jeremiah and that they concerned Israel Judah and then all the nations. We also know the author of the scroll Baruch Ben Niri who we also know from archaeology.

Baruch Ben Niri wrote the scroll of the dictation of Jeremiah. So he is technically the author of that original work. And then finally we know the purpose.

The purpose according to Jeremiah chapter 36 was that in hope it would bring about the repentance of the people of Judah thereby making way for God to pardon their iniquity and their sin. Now in last week's class I talked about these three words in Hebrew pardon *selah* iniquity *avon* and sin *hatat*. Those three words only appear in three passages in all of the Hebrew Bible.

(7:53 - 11:39)

The first one is in Exodus chapter 34 verse 8. In Exodus chapter 34 verse 8 Moses is making an appeal to God that God would forgive *selah* our iniquity *avon* and our sin *hatat*. The second time it occurs is here in Jeremiah chapter 36 leading one to a possible conclusion that what is talked about in Jeremiah 36 could very well be something which was first mentioned in Exodus chapter 34 verse 8. In other words could God be bringing about this Jeremiah scroll in response to Moses's request back in Exodus 34 8. The third passage in which those three words occur is Jeremiah chapter 31 where it talks about the new covenant the goal of which is to bring about the pardon of iniquity and sin. Now I also spoke about this in my previous class that because Jeremiah chapter 30 begins a new scroll it introduces the writing of a scroll which otherwise gives no indication as to a date.

There's no kings mentioned there's no at least no contemporary kings mentioned and so you don't really know where to plug it in but because of the similarity in language between Jeremiah chapter 30 and Jeremiah 36 which both describe a charge from God to Jeremiah to write the words of a scroll it makes one believe that quite possibly these two are the same scroll. In other words this mini scroll within the larger work of the book of Jeremiah could very well be the scroll or part of the scroll the original first scroll of Jeremiah. Now we can be more certain of what was not in that first scroll than we can be about what was in that scroll.

Let me clarify if anything is described in our present book of Jeremiah which clearly takes place after the fourth year of your Hoya King that will be excluded it cannot be part of the original Jeremiah scroll and the reason we know this is very clearly because the Jeremiah scroll the first one was written in the fourth year of your Hoya King. So anything which indicates a date or a time or hints at or gives us a clue that it was written after that was not part of the original first scroll of Jeremiah. Also any mention of a contemporary king if any of these following names occur in a text in our present Jeremiah these names will tell us that it was not part of the original.

These names are Johoya King also known as Jeconiah also known as Konya. Also if we read the name Zedekiah all of these names are the names of kings or names for a king which are after the time of your Hoya King. So they cannot be mentioned in that first scroll because they weren't a king when the scroll was written.

(11:39 - 14:26)

Now another thing that we have to be on the lookout for is don't assume that if we read a passage that has your Hoya King your Hoya King that that is automatically part of the first scroll because remember he served for 11 years. So the first four years content about those first four years could have been in the scroll but anything from year five forward likely or actually could not be part of the first scroll because it was it would occur after the scroll was written. Now we have some obvious candidates for inclusion and they are as follows any prophecy any narrative that describes events or words that are delivered or take place during the 19 years in which Jeremiah's prophetic career and Josiah's monarchy his reign as king anywhere those in those 19 years which overlap that could be and would be in the original Jeremiah scroll.

An example unfortunately we only have one text in Jeremiah which says beyond any doubt that clearly states this takes place in the days of Josiah and that's Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 6. But the problem is that material around it we don't really know for sure. Now there's some which we can be more certain of for instance the call of Jeremiah the way the book begins where it talks about how he's a young boy and he's called initially into the career as a prophet that would be very very likely in the first scroll of Jeremiah and some might argue that but it certainly fits within the time frame it is a likely candidate to be in the original. But again there are prophecies around Jeremiah 3 6 which says clearly this is a word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah around that we don't know for certain so we have to make the best educated guess that we can on some of those texts and it's not so difficult in many cases but some of this material can with a fair degree of certainty be placed within that initial scroll.

(14:28 - 15:12)

Now from the outset of Jeremiah's prophetic career he warned of impending danger from the north. You remember way back in chapter 1 he has a vision one of his first prophetic visions of a cauldron pointed tipped from the north indicating that the enemy that destruction was coming from that particular direction. Now in the book of Jeremiah in our present book this enemy from the north that particular idea is mentioned 25 times in the book of Jeremiah.

(15:12 - 15:54)

But get this the bringer of this disaster from the north is not given a name at least not in prophecies which appear to be presented as occurring earlier in the book or in the timeline of Jeremiah's world and word. So if it comes early in that we don't have a name that all changes at a certain point and we're going to get to that. But let's look at some of these passages which describe danger disaster destruction ruin coming from the north but without a specific name.

(15:54 - 17:16)

Let's go back to Jeremiah chapter 1 and beginning in verse 13. The word of the Lord came to me a second time saying what do you see. And I said I see a boiling pot or a cauldron facing away from the north.

Then the Lord said to me out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. For behold I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north declares the Lord. They shall come and everyone shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem against its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah.

Notice disaster coming from the north. We have just sort of a broad description all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north but no names no specificity given in this particular text. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 4 Jeremiah chapter 4 and verse 6 raise a standard towards the own flee for safety stay not for I bring disaster from the north and great destruction.

(17:16 - 19:16)

A lion has gone up from his thicket a destroyer of nations has set out. He's gone out from his place to make your land a waste. Your cities will be ruins without inhabitant for this put on sackcloth lament and well for the fierce anger of the Lord has not turned back from us.

Notice again destruction ruin devastation is coming from the north but we don't have a name. There's no name given for the destroyer who is coming from that direction. Look at Jeremiah chapter 6 I'm only dealing with text in Jeremiah Jeremiah 6 1 flee for safety oh people of Benjamin from the midst of Jerusalem blow the trumpet and to call raise a signal on bait.

Ha ha for disaster looms out of the north and great disaster. Go down to verse 22 Jeremiah 6 22 and it says the following. Thus says the Lord behold a people is coming from the north country.

A great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold on bow and javelin. They're cruel and have no mercy.

The sound of them is like the roaring sea. They ride on horses set in array as a man for battle against you or daughter of Zion. And then it goes on and tells more detail about this enemy unnamed coming from the north.

Now look at Jeremiah chapter 10 and verse 22. Jeremiah 10 22 says the following a voice a rumor. Behold it comes a great commotion out of the north country to make the cities of Judah desolation a lair of jackals.

(19:17 - 19:40)

So Jeremiah is consistently bringing a warning of impending doom out of the north. But early in his prophetic career this enemy from the north is not given a name. But in chapter 25 we get a name for the destroyer from the north for the first time.

(19:40 - 21:15)

Go to Jeremiah chapter 25 and we're going to begin in verse eight. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts because you have not obeyed my words. Behold I will send for all the tribes of the north.

Now this matches earlier language in Jeremiah from some of the passages we read before. Behold I will send for all the tribes of the north declares the Lord. And for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all these surrounding nations.

I will devote them to destruction make them a horror a hissing and an everlasting desolation. Moreover I will banish from them the voice of mirth the voice of gladness the voice of bridegroom and the voice of bride the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. The idea in this text is clearly the same as before with more detail now as the day comes closer Jeremiah's vision it seems becomes more clear he sees coming not just people from the north not just a group coming from the north land but now he sees very specifically the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar he names him.

(21:16 - 45:44)

Not only is the destroyer from the north named but it's very clearly said that this is impending and this particular act from Nebuchadnezzar is by the command of God because God calls him my servant. So the attacker from the north is doing God's bidding and Jeremiah is telling the people of the day that that is the case. Now I want you to please notice go with me to Jeremiah 25 verse 1 because I want you to know when the timing of this is.

Jeremiah 25 1 says the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Yahweh came the son of Josiah king of Judah and then a parenthetical statement says that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. So in 25 at the outset we read that this is the fourth year of Yahweh came and why is that significant because the fourth year of Yahweh came is the year in which Jeremiah's first scroll was written. We know that because of Jeremiah 36.

We know that because of Jeremiah chapter 45. Now within the parameters of potential inclusion this particular passage Jeremiah chapter 25 in fact the entire chapter chapter 25 seems to be a text that was very much very likely a part of the original scroll of Jeremiah and I want to set forth to make that point clearly it's written in the fourth year read the scroll was read and destroyed in the fifth year but this particular passage tells us that we're in the fourth year we're reading a historical point that occurs in the year that the scroll was written. Now it also this particular chapter also contains within it something that is very close closely resembles the very thing that sets Yahweh you came off when he hears the words of the scroll remember in chapter 36 verse 29.

God says that your Hoya King says the reason he destroyed the scroll the first one is because it predicted King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon coming in to destroy the land and to take captives to lead the people into exile to leave the land barren this so set him off that's what caused him to burn the scroll in chapter 25 contains those very things not in the exact words but it does contain the elements that we're looking for it recounts also in chapter 25 a consistent appeal from God through his prophets for the people to make repentance. Now remember when the scroll is written in Jeremiah chapter 36 we read very clearly that one of the reasons one of the things that is mentioned in 36 is that it the purpose of the scroll is that perhaps when the people hear it they'll confess they'll repent they'll turn from their sins God will ultimately pardon their iniquity and theirs and their sin so I want you to look with me at Jeremiah 25 beginning in verse 3 this is Jeremiah speaking for 23 years from the 13th year of Josiah the son of Ammon king of Judah to this day the word of the Lord has come to me and I've spoken persistently to you but you've not listened you've neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets saying turn now every one of you from his evil way and his evil deeds and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old forever don't go after other gods to serve and worship them or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands then I will do you no harm yet you've not listened to me declares the Lord that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your harm now this is followed this the the message that says just repent turn and repent but but it's then sealed with this idea that though you've been called to though the prophets have called to you to repent you haven't listened then this is followed by something quite stark it's followed by a threat it's followed by a threat similar to the wording that so angered yahuwah you came in chapter 36 so look at chapter 25 verse 11 it says this whole land this immediately follows the threat which i'm associating with the threat mentioned in jeremiah 36 29 it then says this whole land shall become a ruin and a waste and these nations shall serve the king of babylon 70 years and then after 70 years are completed i'll punish the king of babylon and that nation the land of the chaldeans for their iniquity declares the lord making the land an everlasting waste i will bring upon that land all the words that i've uttered against it everything written in this safer in this account in this scroll which jeremiah prophesied against all the nations now this particular passage jeremiah chapter 25 describes a 70 year period now we're not going to get into it in this class but in jeremiah chapter 25 in verse 11 and 12 it mentions 70 years and this 70 years prophecy is spoken of and interpreted by daniel and we remember in daniel chapter 9 he gets into an interpretation of these particular words at this point i'm not interested in that interpretation i'm interested in in exactly what the 70 years means in context in context in jeremiah chapter 25 the 70 years are declared not get this not as the duration of an exile not at all associated with the 70 year exile into babylon most people miss this but rather as babylon's power over the nations in other words for 70 years babylon will hold sway over the nations there's no mention at this point about how long the children of israel are going to be exiled from their land now in the mesoretic text in the hebrew bible this passage this verse in jeremiah 25 verse 13 it's followed by in the mesoretic text an oracle against the nations it talks about a cup of wrath that all the nations will have to drink beginning by the way with jerusalem and the towns of judah so they're to drink the cup of the lord's wrath and then that cup of the lord's wrath will be given to other nations surrounding jerusalem judah etc beginning with egypt so after jerusalem then you go to egypt egypt must drink the cup of wrath then it goes through several other countries and you'll uh if you read through chapter 25 particularly verses 17

through 26 you'll see these uh who have to consume from the cup of wrath beginning with egypt the last one mentioned is shishak now shishak is another name for babel babylon shishak is called an atbash meaning that if babel is spelled with the second letter the second letter if you count the letters of the hebrew alphabet bait bait lamed you count those and then you switch it's like you you would write the hebrew letters uh right to left aleph all the way to tab and then underneath that you would write from aleph all the way to tab so that aleph equals tab bait equals sheen you see that so that way it's a flip it's an atbash so he's he's saying that every nation from egypt to shishak which is babel will ultimately drink of this particular uh cup of wrath now i want to point out that if you look at the septuagint the greek version of the book of jeremiah right after jeremiah 25 13 rather than give what you just see in your masoretic text it has oracles of the nations in a much expanded form much more detailed a detailed form of oracles against the nation now this particular grouping of oracles against the nations that we find in the septuagint after 25 chapter 25 verse 13 we find a form of those same oracles against the nations in the masoretic text of the hebrew bible but they don't occur after 25 13 they actually occur in the masoretic text as chapters 46 through 51 in the hebrew so where do they belong this is a question which one's more accurate now is it the masoretic text of the hebrew bible or is it the septuagint and many people assume that the hebrew bible as we have it the masoretic text is earlier it's older the greek is a translation from that text but we we know from the dead sea scrolls and numerous occasions that that is not correct that quite often the septuagint refers to a text in hebrew that appears to be an earlier form than what's been preserved in the masoretic text be that as it may the oracles against the nation in the masoretic bible are contained in chapters 46 through 51 now if you begin to read through those in chapter 46 you'll see that the first oracle against the nation is against egypt in fact in 46 verse 2 it tells us that this uh egypt was defeated by babylon in the fourth year of yahuwah king so we begin with egypt this oracle occurs about the time that the scroll the first scroll of jeremiah is being written i also find it interesting that if you work through the text you get to the end of chapter 51 the end of these this collection of oracles against the nations what you'll find is a phrase that says thus far the words of jeremiah well that's an odd way to end a section when jeremiah chapter 52 continues the book the present book of jeremiah it's almost as if jeremiah chapter 46 through 51 was meant to be the close of the book of jeremiah and perhaps it was the way the original book of jeremiah closed in some form in other words there are things within 46 through 51 which had been added at a later point they're mentioned in fact there's at least one or two references to king zedekiah which would put us outside the parameter of the 23 years of material that was contained in the original so per the septuagint the oracles against the nation are seemingly connected to the fourth year of yahuwah king and therefore these oracles were likely part of the original jeremiah scroll now the same thing actually applies to the hebrew in the mesoretic text these oracles 46 through 51 also are connected with a passage that is tied to the fourth year of yahuwah king look with me to chapter 45 jeremiah 45 by the way this chapter occurs right before the beginning of the collection of oracles against the nation listen to the following the word that jeremiah the prophet spoke to baruch the son of niriah when he wrote these words in a book at the dictation of jeremiah in the fourth year of yahuwah king the son of josiah king of judah now this is during the time in which baruch is writing the scroll of jeremiah the first one chapter 45 is only five verses long it's followed by 46 through 51 oracles of the nations to me this is confirmation that the oracles of the nation whether in the septuagint or the mesoretic text both of these are headed by a passage which indicates the timing of these

oracles is in the fourth year of yahuwah king and therefore i propose that these particular oracles were part of the original now if we look if we look at these particular passages one of the things that i want to bring up is that this cup of wrath began with jerusalem but was ultimately intended to be for all nations to drink jeremiah chapter 25 29 declares that without any ambiguity and remember in jeremiah chapter 1 verse 10 this has always been the mission of jeremiah he's to go to israel and judah but he's also called to be a prophet to the nations so in this way he fulfills his role in his first scroll now i propose that a series of oracles against the nations was part of jeremiah's ha megillah harishuna his first scroll in jeremiah 25 verses 11 through 14 we read about 70 years for babylon's rule over the nations the 70 years then are babylon's 70 in other words the the 70 year period has to do with babylon's rule and not strictly speaking the time of judah's exile look at this go with me to jeremiah 29 jeremiah 29 and i want to pick up in verse 10 jeremiah 29 10 for thus says the lord when 70 years are completed for babylon i will visit you and i will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place for i know the plans i have for you declares the lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and i will hear you you'll seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart i will be found by you declares the lord and i will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where i've driven you declares the lord and i'll bring you back to the place from which i sent you in exile so the restoration will in fact begin at the close of the 70 years but those 70 years begin before the fullness of the exile begins we're going to take this a little bit further in our examination babylon's 70 years actually began with the defeat of egypt in the fourth year of yahuwah you came in 605 bce because remember it's babylon's 70 years it's 70 years for babylon to rule begin and complete its rule over the nations begins in 605 bce now in 609 bce four years prior to the defeat of egypt by babylon at carcamesh a king by the name of josiah was en route to the river euphrates to join the forces of babylon against assyria who was allied with egypt and at megiddo according to kings and chronicles we have king nico of egypt warned josiah that he has nothing to do with him in other words don't involve yourself but josiah did anyway and he was killed on a battlefield at megiddo what i find striking is that from the death of josiah in 609 bce if you add 70 years it brings you to cyrus's first year over babylon in 539 bce now this persian cyrus known in the hebrew bible by the name koresh put an end to babylon's 70-year rule over the nations interestingly enough of koresh god says the following go with me to isaiah isaiah 44 isaiah 44 we're going to read verse 28 this is from what scholars refer to as the deuterio isaiah or second isaiah who says of cyrus verse 28 he is my shepherd he shall fulfill all my purpose if you go down to chapter 45 in verse 1 of isaiah it says thus says the lord to his messiah to koresh to cyrus whose right hand i have grasped to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings to open doors before him the gates may not be closed i will go before you and level the exalted places i will break in pieces the doors of bronze cut through the bars of iron i'll give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes and secret places that you might know that it is i the lord the god of israel who call you by your name for the sake of my servant jacob and israel my chosen i call you by your name i name you though you do not know me i am the lord and there is no other besides me there is no god i equip you though you do not know me that people may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me i am the lord and there is no other i form light and create darkness i make well-being and create calamity i am the lord who does all these things shower oh heavens from above and let the clouds rain down righteousness let the earth open that salvation and righteous may bear fruit that the earth let the earth

cause them both to sprout i the lord have created it this is a word of the lord of jehovah to cyrus to koresh a persian king it's very clear you need to recognize he refers to a persian as the messiah a persian king is called the messiah by god now quite often people talk about oh let's talk about the messiah what do we know about the messiah he's this he's that he's the son of david but very clearly the messiah according to isaiah 45 is someone that god declares to be the messiah in this case it's a persian by the name of koresh but during the days of yahuwah king in the fourth year of his reign jeremiah dictated the words of his prophecies to his fateful scribe baruch ben niriiah the words of hamagillah arishana included prophecies against the nations it included the word of a 70-year period of babylon's rule and it said that that period of 70 years had begun the chaldeans would indeed destroy jerusalem and strip the land of its inhabitants when heard these words he was so angry that he fed that scroll to the flames but babylon's 70 years of ruling over the nations had already begun