

Chronology & Context - The Prophet Jeremiah: 3

(0:00 - 1:53)

And I've said I will not remember him and I won't speak again in his name, but he was in my heart like a burning fire restrained in my bones and I'm weary containing and I'm unable. Jeremiah of Anatote. We all know a form of those words.

We know many of the sayings of Jeremiah. We know long passages. What about this one? Days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand, brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Though I was a husband to them, they broke that covenant. But this is the covenant that I will make with them on those days. I will put my words within them and write my law upon their hearts.

We know a lot of these sayings. We know a lot of these passages. I thought about this one as well.

For I know the thoughts that I have thought over you, declares Jehovah. Thoughts of peace and not for bad, to give you a future and a hope. But what about the context? A lot of times we take various passages of the Bible and they're beautiful passages and they're meaningful to us in a very special and personal way.

(1:54 - 13:43)

But when we study the biblical text, when we study these passages, it's very important to get the context, to understand who is speaking and to whom. What did they mean to the speaker, to those who heard these words in those days? And then another question is, who were they intended for and who did hear these words? Today, I intend to go through a lesson in context. One of the things that I think is important is to really understand where these passages fit in, not only chronologically, but in a number of other ways.

Welcome, Shabbat Shalom. Welcome to United Israel World Union. This is our ongoing study of the world and words of Jeremiah, the prophet.

Yirmeyahu ben Hilkiyahu, a priest from Anatote, a priest from the priest who were at Anatote, which as we learned in lesson one, is a very specific group of priests, priests that are associated with the family of Aviatar, not Zadok. It's a different priesthood, but we covered that. I told you in class one that we're faced with many challenges when it comes to the book of Jeremiah, and not the least of which is that the book of Jeremiah is not, all caps, underlined and highlighted, is not, at least in the form that we now possess it, in chronological order.

It is not in chronological order. When I talk about sharing a class on context today, what I'm going to spend most of my time doing today is building that point very clearly. I want to make sure that you see the concern, the challenges that are before us.

We're going to go through quite a bit that shows us, is there a possibility that we could reorder things, that we could rearrange things, that we could study the book of Jeremiah in

such a way that we can see how it's supposed to be, at least in terms of chronological ordering. So, we're not left clueless. We're not helpless in this regard.

There are plenty of clues within the text. The texts provide valuable information. As we work through, you will see what I'm talking about.

So, the purpose of today's class is to show you the challenge before us, particularly when we deal with understanding the original order and arrangement of this material. I posted on social media that I spent, at the time I posted it, I went on to study for several more hours, but I spent nine hours yesterday working through the book of Jeremiah, taking notes. So, I would read a passage and I would place that into its chronological order.

Chapter one, is that at the beginning? Should it be at the beginning? Chapter two, three, four, all the way through chapter 52. It's a very worthy exercise. It helped me tremendously.

If you open up any study Bible and read, say, the introduction to the book of Jeremiah, most of those, most of the books that I have here in my library, will tell you that the chronology or the order and arrangement of the books is not following chronology. So, in order to study the subject, the world and words of Jeremiah the prophet, we need to put that back in order. So, for instance, when Jeremiah says, I will not remember him, I won't speak again in his name, but he was in my heart like a burning fire restrained in my bones and I'm weary containing and I'm unable.

What's the context of that? Is he speaking to someone? Is he, you know, what are we dealing with in that? Now, this is necessary groundwork. Now, I promise you that this will be an engaging and challenging class. So, I hope that you are ready.

I hope that you have a pen and paper and, of course, you know that our good friend and scribe Baruch will help us with notes that should be posted as soon as he is able to do his magic. Now, we know, for instance, when we talk about arranging these particular passages of Jeremiah, we know certain things. So, for instance, we know that the word of Hashem, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah within a defined period.

So, we can begin to put parameters on the timing, but it's not so specific until we look at the details within the text. So, for instance, we know this according to the text of Jeremiah, that Jeremiah first hears the word of the Lord in the 13th year of Josiah's reign, all right? So, we can date this. We know when that word first came to Jeremiah, and we know a lot of other details.

For instance, we also know that it began coming to him. He first hears the word of the Lord in the 13th year of Josiah's reign, and according to the superscription, Jeremiah chapter 1, verses 1 through 3, it says that it continued from the 13th year of Josiah's reign until the end of the 11th year of Zedekiah, called the son of Josiah, in Jeremiah 1, verse 3, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. So, we can now open this up, and if we know the date when Josiah assumes the throne, we simply count 13 years, and we do, by the way.

So, we can really get very focused on this. Not all of the Bible is this easy. Jeremiah gives us more detail, almost, than any other book of the Hebrew Bible.

So, it's really clear, and again, that's the purpose of today's class, is to show you how specific a lot of these words are, and a lot of the narrative and context is, if we can just simply read the text. So, we know the order of, in the years of the reigning kings of Judah, from the book of Kings and Chronicles. So, we have these helpful supplemental materials.

So, we're not just going to study the book of Jeremiah, but we're going to bring in, for instance, if I'm looking at Jeremiah's prophetic career, let's call it, during the days of Josiah, I've got quite a bit to go from. Number one, I can put it, I can go from the 13th year. Now, we know that Josiah reigned for 31 years.

We learned that in 2 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 34. So, we know that he begins his reign at eight years old, and then the 13th year of his reign, Jeremiah hears the word of the Lord, and then it's going to continue from that point, the 13th year to the 31st year, which means that for the reign of Josiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah for 19 years of the 31 of Josiah's reign. By the way, the superscription, Jeremiah 1.1 through 1.3, gives us three kings, the name of three Judean kings of the five final kings.

Now, follow me closely on that. It lists Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. Zedekiah is the last Judean king, but that's three.

There are actually five Judean kings from Josiah counting forward. So, if you go with Josiah, you also have Yehoahaz, and Yehoiakin, not Yehoiakim, but Yehoiakin, who's also known as Jeconiah in English, and he's referred to also by Jeremiah as Coniah. So, we have to keep all this straight.

So, Jeremiah only mentions three of those five, but the two that he doesn't mention in the superscription or that the writer, the scribe doesn't include in the superscription, Yehoahaz and Yehoiakin, those two kings both had a reign of only three months. So, it's like, yeah, it's not even hardly worth mentioning. But get this, Jeremiah mentions all five of them.

The book of Jeremiah does mention all five of those kings, and you'll see that as we work through. Now, you have to be careful. You have to really study, and you have to know your stuff because sometimes a different name is used.

Kings often had different names. Sometimes they had a birth name, a renal name, a name that they assumed when they took the throne. In the case of the book of Jeremiah and the final kings, we have the king of Babylon actually renaming some of the kings.

Thank you very much. That's right. The Babylonians were big on renaming people.

Look at the book of Daniel. Now, all five of these kings are mentioned in the book of Jeremiah. The span of the final five kings reigns is about 50 years.

So, if you begin with Josiah's becoming king and work all the way through until the 11th year of Zedekiah and the carrying away of the captivity, you're looking at about 50 years. And Jeremiah's, let's call it his prophetic career, was for about 40 of those. And we talked about this.

We look at roughly 627 BCE before the common era. For 40 years, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, we read. And that brings us to about 587 BCE, 586 BCE.

(13:43 - 14:23)

I go with 587 BCE based on my studies, but be that as it may. So again, we have 19 years of Josiah's 31-year reign. The word of the Lord's coming to Jeremiah.

The word of the Lord is operating through Jeremiah for a three-month reign of Jeholiachaz. He's also mentioned by another name, Shalom. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 22.

We're going to jump right in here today. Jeremiah chapter 22. And you'll see this beautiful Bible I'm reading from the JPS.

(14:24 - 15:22)

So, I'll go to the Hebrew when I need to. This is not so literal as I'll often say, but it suits our purpose for today. Jeremiah 22 verse 11, for thus said the Lord concerning Shalom, son of King Josiah of Judah.

Who is Shalom? Who succeeded his father Josiah as king, but who has gone forth from this place. He shall never come back. He will die in the place to which he was exiled, and he shall not see this land again.

And by the way, this pericope, this saying, this word of the Lord to Jeremiah is set off by white spaces. It doesn't really fit within the surrounding context, but it's just a word. It comes in and it's set off by white spaces.

(15:22 - 20:16)

And basically, the message is pretty clear. Is there anyone who doesn't understand what the word of the Lord is saying here? It's not a lot of ambiguity. Shalom, whoever that is, God is saying through the prophet Jeremiah, he's been exiled.

He's not coming back. He's going to die in the place of his exile. We'll talk about who is Shalom later.

There are prophecies which are given that deal specifically with the king, Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim, not only specifically addressing the person of Jehoiakim, but that 11-year period. We're going to have certain contextual things that we'll see that deal with that 11-year period.

Do we know a start time and an end time? Absolutely we do. So we have to pay attention. Then we have the next king, another son of Josiah by the name of Jehoiakim, also known as Jeconiah and Konyah.

We're going to get into prophecies that deal with Konyah. Now, this king, he too, like Yehoahaz or Shalom, I'll go ahead and give you that. Shalom is Yehoahaz.

These two kings, Yehoahaz and Jeconiah, Jehoiakim, only reign for three months. Then the final king, the final Judean king, is a king by the name of Zedekiah. He's also known as Matanah.

Now, we get into some difficulties in the text aside from chronology, and I'll bring those in from time to time. These have caused a great deal of people to turn gray. It's caused rabbis to stare into the text and speculate and wonder and comment on these things.

I'll give you one example. This Zedekiah is described in 2 Chronicles as the brother of Konyah, of Jeconiah. He's called the brother of.

In 2 Kings, he's referred to as the uncle of. It says in Hebrew, dodo, his uncle. So, we have to wonder, which one is it? Is it a brother? Is it an uncle? We're going to uncover and unpack all of these mysteries.

Why is it that our sources don't agree here? I'm not the first one to see these things. You look into some of what the sages have said. They get into this as well.

It's a great mystery. Look, there are other things you can do with your time, but for the life of me, I can't figure out why anyone would choose anything else to occupy themselves with other than the greatest mysteries of the Word of God. Now, phase one again.

I have to establish some certain contextual parameters, and this is why I spent most of the day yesterday going through creating charts. You might say, where are those charts, Ross? Well, I intend to publish those charts for this study, but I just simply ran out of time yesterday. So, if you'll bear with me and be gracious to me, I promise to get those charts published for our study going forward.

You'll just have to listen very closely to me today. You can listen to it again later with Baruch's notes, and it'll make even more sense. All right.

So, phase one is getting the chronology right. Now, at times, quite often in the book attributed to Jeremiah's prophecies and his world, the writers are very specific. They give us not only clues as to the timing, but they share this information with us.

So, let's begin with what is clear. I'm going to go through quite a few examples, and I'm going to share a prophecy with you or a piece of context, and I'm going to allow you to see what I see. How do we put this in its correct place chronologically? Now, some of you who are more fundamentalists might say, well, I like it just the way it is.

(20:16 - 20:36)

Well, that's fine. You just won't understand the context. You can read these things all you want, but if you don't get a handle on where it goes in the history, you're not going to fully grasp who is speaking, who are they speaking to, why would they say such a thing, etc.

(20:36 - 23:02)

Open up your Bibles to the book of Yirmiyahu ben Hilkiyahu, Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 6. Get ready, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. Jeremiah 3, 6, the Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah, stop. This word right here that I'm about to read, I can at least give you a 19-year window in which it happened, right? I mean, that may be all I can give you, but I can tell you that we know that what is follows, what follows takes place in a 19-year window.

Now, the question's going to become, I'm not going to do this today because I have too many other cool things to show you, but I want to know, is there something else in the text

that can narrow that gap? But this happens, how do I know it's in a 19-year window? Because the word of the Lord didn't come to him until the 13th year of Josiah. So what this tells me is, Jeremiah 3, 6 and following had to happen from the 13th year of Josiah's reign. It didn't happen in the 12th, the 11th, the 10th, 9th, 8th, 7th, 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st.

It happened from the 13th year until the 31st year. That's all I know yet, but listen to what he says. This is what the Lord says to Jeremiah.

Notice first person, the Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah, have you seen what rebel Israel did going to every high mountain and under every leafy tree and whoring there? I thought, this is God speaking, after she's done all these things, she'll come back to me, but she did not come back. And her sister, faithless Judah, saw it. I noted because rebel Israel had committed adultery, I cast her off, handed her a bill of divorce, yet her sister, faithless Judah, was not afraid.

(23:02 - 25:06)

She too went and whored. It goes on and on. We're going to take this prophecy totally apart in a later class, but here's what I want you to notice.

Jeremiah and all the prophets, more than 40 sections of the prophets, deal with two very unique and specific and distinct groups, the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Israel, Judah, if you don't get this, you are not properly understanding the Bible. You have to see that God is dealing with two distinct groups, and this becomes very clear in the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Remember when I quoted at the opening of this class the famous new covenant passage, behold, days are coming, saith the Lord, when I'll make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The new covenant, ladies and gentlemen, is not a covenant for the Gentiles, as many people think. I used to hear in church, some of you might not know, that I did begin my journey in fundamental Christianity.

And the way it was kind of taught, even though they didn't use these silly words, was that the Old Testament was the Jew book, the Jew covenant, the Jewish covenant, and the New Testament was for everybody else, right? It opened the door, tore the veil, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And it's all centered on this idea that there is a new covenant coming, and a lot of people will even say, and it even is mentioned in that Old Testament, Jeremiah. Well, guess what? It is, but in the Tanakh, in the prophet Jeremiah, which is the only place that uses that exact phrase, new covenant, it's for very specifically house of Israel, house of Judah.

(25:06 - 26:13)

It goes on to say, not like the covenant that I made with your fathers, a very specific group, which my covenant they broke, I was a husband to them, you see? So anyway, it's very specific. But Jeremiah chapter 3 verse 6 is a word that comes to Jeremiah in a 19-year period. Now, I want you to go with me because this goes on for several, let's just say pages, I'll get into breaks in it later.

I want you to look at verse 16 of chapter 3, by the way. This is still the word of the Lord coming to Jeremiah in this 19-year period. He says this, verse 16, chapter 3, Jeremiah, and

when you increase and are fertile in the land, in those days declares the Lord, men shall no longer speak of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, nor shall it come to mind, they shall not mention it or miss it or make another.

(26:15 - 28:10)

Now, let me ask you something. If we can put this passage in the days of Josiah, and we can, why is Jeremiah saying this about the ark of the covenant? We have to wonder the motive behind a certain word. Let me ask you this.

Could it be that everybody's focused on the ark of the covenant, and he is saying that that emphasis will no longer be there at some future point? It could be. Now, I'm going to give you answers to all these things later, not today. But it could also be, let's say, what if the ark is missing at this point? And what if the people are like, oh, I wish we had the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Jeremiah, inspired by a word that came to him, says days are coming when men shall no longer speak of the ark of the covenant.

And they'll no longer, it won't even come to their mind. They won't make another one. Now, think about that.

A lot of people in Torah faith will say, you know, the Torah is eternal as we have it. Well, can you imagine how awkward it's going to be sometime in the *olam haba*, when people are sitting around, there's harp music in the background, and someone says, the Torah reading this week covers the ark of the covenant, and the music stops, and everybody looks and says, the what? Oh, we're reading from Exodus 25. It's describing Betzalel and Aholiab in the ark of the covenant.

Well, this says that a day is coming when it's not even going to be mentioned. It's not going to come to mind. You're not going to make another one.

(28:10 - 30:46)

So, the question becomes, is this prophecy contextually giving us a clue that at the time relates to the ark of the covenant? And the answer to that is yes, and we'll get to that. Go to chapter 21 of Jeremiah, chapter 21, and we're going to just work through some of these to talk about context. We're going to go back and take these things after we establish the chronology and what chapters go in what order chronologically, then we can begin in the next weeks to take the time of Josiah, the time of Shalom, the time of Jehoiakim, okay? Now, look at chapter 21, verse 1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, let's see how specific this gets.

When King Zedekiah sent to him Paschur son of Malkiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to say, please inquire of the Lord on our behalf, for King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon is attacking us. Now, this is pretty specific. We know that chapter 21 contains a word of the Lord to Jeremiah during the days of Zedekiah.

Now, Zedekiah is the last 11 years of the commonwealth of Judah. It's the final 11 years before the carrying away, the final exile in 587, 86 BCE. So Zedekiah, now we have to wonder, are we already at chapter 21 at the end? Are we? Well, let's keep going.

Let's look at chapter 22, verse 18. I just have a few of these in my notes. Assuredly, 22, 18, thus said the Lord concerning Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, they shall not mourn for him.

Ah, brother, ah, sister, they shall not mourn for him. Ah, Lord, ah, his majesty, he shall have the burial of an ass dragged out and left lying outside the gates of Jerusalem. Just a little, here's a word of the Lord for you, Jeremiah.

(30:47 - 34:27)

But it's talking about Jehoiakim. Now, Jehoiakim is before, is before Zedekiah. So you see how the order is not right? The dragging out the gates and the mourning for Jehoiakim would have already taken place.

It's not chronological. Jehoiakim is the third king. Look at chapter 22 of Jeremiah, verse 24.

As I live, declares the Lord, if you, O king Konyah, son of Jehoiakim of Judah, were a signet on my right hand, I would tear you off even from there. I'll deliver you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of those you dread, into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and into the hands of the Chaldeans. I'll hurl you and the mother who bore you, I know her name by the way, into another land where you were not born, there you shall both die.

There they shall not return to the land that they yearn to come back to. Konyah, see now we're in a different period. So it's not always in order.

So you might have some Zedekiah, the word of the Lord to Jeremiah during the last 11 years. You might then jump back to the time of Jehoiakim. Then you might move forward to Konyah.

Then you might move back. Let's go to, by the way, Konyah is the fourth king. Let's go to chapter 24, verse 1. Let's see where we are here.

The Lord showed me two baskets of figs. Now I want to know, inquiring minds want to know, when did God show Jeremiah a vision of two figs? What else is more important in life than knowing this detail? The Lord showed me two baskets of figs placed in front of the temple of the Lord. This was after King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon had exiled King Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim of Judah, and the officials of Judah and the craftsmen and the smiths from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon.

Is that pretty specific? Very specific. So if I only knew a date, and I do, I can say put that date on a piece of paper and put Jeremiah chapter 24 to the right of it if I'm going left to right. You see? It's all about understanding the order.

So let's say I'm moving from year one to year five, or I'm moving forward in time. Now let's see if that continues. Look at chapter 25.

The word which came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, now I know who it's to, I know what it's about, but when? When did this word come, Ross? In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim. Now wait a minute. 24 deals with the exile of Jeconiah, right? The son of Jehoiakim, but chapter 25 is in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, so it's going back in time.

(34:28 - 35:29)

Look, as I worked through this yesterday, it almost reminded me, and I'm not making fun, I'm not telling a joke, but I could almost imagine all of these ancient, like a shoe box, full of fragments of a scroll or scrolls that contain words of the Lord to Jeremiah, and someone dropped the box on the ground. They were all stacked in order, and they picked them up, and they were scared that they would get, so they just put them here. Are they in order? Yes, sir.

They're in order. They're not in order. It's totally jumbled, and if someone wants to understand, particularly the last 40 years and beyond, by the way, the end of the Judean stronghold or capital of Jerusalem, you have to get things in order first.

(35:30 - 36:27)

Chapter 25, again, is in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and it's here, beginning in verse 11, that we have to go when we get to study Daniel chapter 9, the famous 70 weeks passage. You have to study this, and you have to study a couple of other passages in Jeremiah. Why do I say that? Because Daniel was studying Jeremiah to understand it, whereas most people today who want to jump into the mysterious Daniel the prophet, they don't spend enough time in Jeremiah, and I tell them all the time, but Daniel did.

Daniel was studying Jeremiah when he wrote what he wrote, so if you want to understand what he's talking about, you have to get where he's at. You have to get in the book he's looking at, and he's in this chapter here. Now, look at chapter 26.

(36:28 - 38:53)

Chapter 26, in the Hebrew, this begins, b'reishit. Now, how many of you know that word, b'reishit? B'reishit is used, it's the first word in the Hebrew Bible. It's the first word in the book of Genesis.

B'reishit, b'reah Elohim et ha'shamayim, v'et ha'aretz, v'ha'aretz ha'etotu b'vohu. It's translated, in the beginning or in getting started or at the first of God's creation, b'reishit. Rosh, the root word means the head or the beginning, the source.

So, this is saying, and by the way, the word b'reishit in that very exact form only occurs five times in the Hebrew Bible, once in Genesis 1-1 and four other times all in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah uses it to say, at the first of the reign of, and then he gives the context. So, in Jeremiah 26, it says, at the beginning, b'reishit, of the reign, mam lechut, of King Jehoiakim, son of Josiah of Judah, this word came from the Lord.

Jeremiah 26-1. Now, uh, when did it happen? What is about to come is, it tells us the word that's about to come, go stand in the court of the house of the Lord. Uh, it's going to take place at the beginning of King Jehoiakim's reign.

Now, Jehoiakim is the son of Josiah, so this is going to come later in our study, but let me tell you this, just to show you how this lines up. Chapter 26 has to be studied with chapter 7. They go together. Chapter 7 of Jeremiah is describing the same prophecy, the word of the Lord, Jeremiah, go stand in the house of the court.

(38:54 - 1:03:35)

You go stand in the temple, and then he gives his famous, uh, the great temple sermon, which just about put him under. In other words, they wanted to kill him. You know, Jeremiah spent some time in prison.

Uh, this is how popular of a Bible teacher he was in his day, right? We all look to his words now, and we love them, uh, but back in the day, he was not, uh, a loved preacher, right? So, the context of 26 puts us in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, which means Josiah is dead. It has to be, you remember Josiah's reign was 31 years, so we can put this 19, almost 20 years after, 20 or more years after Jeremiah first hears the word of the Lord. It's been 20 years the word of the Lord has been coming to him when he gets the message.

Now, Jeremiah, go stand in the temple and proclaim these words, and he does, but when we study the reign of Jehoiakim, we're going to be looking at chapter 7 and chapter 26 together. Look at chapter 27 now. At the beginning, now this one's a tricky one.

I need a sip of coffee for this one. Okay, chapter 27. I also need the Hebrew open.

Now, I want you to go ahead and, to yourself, don't read it out loud. Well, you can, just not if you're in this room. Jeremiah 27, verse 1. It says, at the beginning of the reign, at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord.

Now, you're going to jump on this because you're great Bible students, and you're going to say, okay, all right, the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, I got you, but there's a mistake. Are you ready for a mistake? Can you handle a mistake? Keep reading. Thus said the Lord to me, make for yourself thongs and bars of a yoke and put them on your neck and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, the king of Sidon by envoys who have come to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem.

Wait a minute. Come to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem, but I thought this was in the reign of King Jehoiakim. Verse 1 says it's the king, the reign of King Jehoiakim, but verse 3 says King Zedekiah, and give them this charge to their masters.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, God of Israel, say this to your masters, it is I who made the earth and the men and the beast who are on the earth by my great might and my outstretched arm, and I give it to whomever I deem proper. As you go through, you recognize that context tells us that it is not in the reign of Jehoiakim, but it's in the reign of Zedekiah. Zedekiah is the last 11 years.

So, what happened here? Clearly, we have a fragment. Verse 1 is a fragment that was inserted in this place, but this is not the right heading for the prophecy which follows. Now, we're going to encounter some of those things, but when we do, we don't get all nervous about it.

We just simply recognize it for what it is. The writer or the editor is confused, and this is out of place. Can we resolve this discrepancy? Yes, we can.

Yes, we can. We have to be honest with the text. We have to not come up with some fanciful reason as to why we have this discrepancy.

We have to face it head on, and we have to determine, A, is context enough to tell us whether it's Zedekiah or Jehoiakim, and the answer to that is yes. Okay, moving on. Look at chapter 28.

I'm going to do this quickly. That year, early in the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah, son of Azur, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priest and all the people, and then he said. Now, is that pretty specific? Pretty specific.

Zedekiah is king. It's in the fifth month of the fourth year, so if we know when Zedekiah became king, we can go to the fourth year and we can say, and I did this by the way, chapter 28 goes here. So, what you do is, as you build the chronological table, then when you prepare your next class, you go, I'm going to work on this chapter, this chapter, this chapter.

I'm going to skip this one because it comes later, you see? So, I want to give a flowing, rolling commentary according to the chronology, and part of the reason is, I know that Jeremiah wrote his initial scroll in a certain time period. It's during the fourth year of Jehoiakim. 23 years into his prophetic career, he writes his scroll, the original Jeremiah scroll.

I did this last week. He writes the original Jeremiah scroll, and the king burns it in the fire, and then God tells him, go back to work, make another one, and oh, by the way, add a few details about the guy that just burned that scroll. I'm not finished yet.

So, then we have version two, etc. The revised standard edition of Jeremiah came forth. Look at chapter 29.

This is the letter which the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the priest, the prophets, the rest of the elders of the exile community, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen, and the smiths had left Jerusalem. Now, that's pretty clear that this is later. Look at this, verse 3, the letter was sent through Elisha son of Shaphan and Gamariah son of Hilkiyah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah had dispatched to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Now, isn't that interesting? So, 29 comes in, and the exile or an exile of certain people groups had already taken place. So, I'm going to go ahead and propose to you that this is out of place. Now, look at chapter, notice I'm skipping 30.

Why am I skipping 30? Because we don't get a date, but I'm going to propose a date, but listen to this. Let me go ahead and not skip 30. See there? The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, thus said the Lord, the God of Israel, write down in a scroll all the words that I've spoken to you for days are coming declares the Lord when I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah.

Notice the two groups. Now, when is this scroll? I'm going to teach a special class on a scroll within the There's several scrolls within the book of Jeremiah. This is one, and it's his most important work begins right here, but we're not going to get into that yet.

Go to 32. Notice I'm skipping 31. 32, the word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the 10th year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the 18th year of King Nebuchadnezzar.

At the time, the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the prison compound attached to the palace of the king of Judah. Is that pretty specific? Yeah. Yeah.

I can put that on my chart, and I know when I'm going to teach that class based on where it falls out. I just take 32, and I go, this word of the Lord goes in the 10th year of King Zedekiah, and let me show you also on my chart. I know when the king of Babylon takes over, so I just count down.

My Excel spreadsheet says, yep, it's the 10th year of Zedekiah. Yes, it's the 18th year of the king of Babylon, but it does not go here if you're trying to chronologically lay out the text. It's easy to sort.

Somebody dropped the box, I'm telling you. Okay. Look at 33, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time while he was still confined in the prison compound, so this sounds like it goes with 32, doesn't it? Then you go to 34, the word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth and all the people under his sway were waging war against Jerusalem were in the time of King Zedekiah.

It's in the next verse. Now, I'm skipping 36. I'm skipping 35.

I'm skipping 36 because why? I'll get to that in a moment. I want you to look at 37, Zedekiah, son of Josiah became king instead of Kunya. Now, we've had chapters already that deal with Zedekiah being king, so don't you think it would make more sense if these were all clumped together? If I move everything dealing with the time of Zedekiah into one place and then I have certain passages which say it was the 10th year of Zedekiah and the 18th year of that, I can put these in order.

Now, why someone else hasn't done this, well, I guess somebody probably did. I know some of you are such great students, you're going to go find a book on Amazon and it probably is there. I haven't looked.

Jeremiah restored to its proper order by Ross Nichols. That would be somebody else. I haven't done it.

38 deals with the same context. Look at 39. In the ninth year of King Zedekiah of Judah in the 10th month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon moved against Jerusalem with his whole army.

Pretty specific, right? Then if you go to chapter 52, we're dealing with Zedekiah. Now, look at chapter 35. Again, I'm throwing a lot at you this morning, but just to paint for you, there is a saying that if you want people to understand something, if I'm trying to tell you that the

book of Jeremiah is not presently arranged in the proper order, and let's say you're very fundamentalist and you say it doesn't really matter, my task is to show you that yes, it does really matter.

Therefore, you need me to show you, or you need someone to show you, the proper order, and so you create a vision for a better way. That's what we're doing here. Look at chapter 35.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of King Jehoiakim, son of Josiah of Judah. Now, this is the passage that deals with the Rechovites. The Rechovites.

And remember, he's talking about this non-Israelite group, non-Hebrew group, and he's complimenting them for their adherence to this tradition of not drinking wine and their respect for their elders, and he's using it to contrast to the people of the book. He's saying these people are doing it right, but we know when that happened. It happened in the time of Jehoiakim.

By the way, if you look at chapter 36 again, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, this is the fourth year of Jehoiakim. 36, chapter 36 and 25, must be read together because they're in the same time, and it's during the time, the fourth year of Jehoiakim, that 25 takes place and 36 takes place, and in 36, the fourth year of Jehoiakim is when Jeremiah writes his scroll for the first time. By the way, you have one other chapter that you have to bring in.

One other chapter, 25, 36, and one other chapter goes to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and you won't believe this, but it's not in order, but let me show you. I'm going to read you the whole chapter. It's the shortest chapter in Jeremiah.

Everyone said, amen. Jeremiah 45. You'll notice right away that this is out of place.

It should be back with 36. Listen to this. The word which the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch, son of Neriah, when he was writing the words in a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim, son of Josiah of Judah.

You know where that puts us? Chapter 36, because in 36, Jeremiah is dictating the word of the Lord to Baruch, who's writing them, and it's in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. So what does Jeremiah tell Baruch? Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning you, Baruch. This is kind of cool.

God is talking through Jeremiah to Baruch as he's writing the words of the scroll. You say, woe is me. The Lord has added grief to my pain.

I'm worn out with groaning, and I've found no rest. So Baruch has been complaining, probably to himself, and the Lord is letting him know through Jeremiah that he heard him. Verse 4, thus you shall speak to him.

Thus said the Lord, I'm going to overthrow what I've built, uproot what I've planted. This applies to the whole land. And do you expect great things for yourself? Don't expect them, for I'm going to bring disaster upon all flesh, declares Jehovah.

But I will at least grant you your life in all the places where you may go. You know, that would have been a good thing to put in the place where it happened. And we're going to do that.

When we get into dissecting the actual scroll and when it was written, we're going to bring these things together. I'm just showing it to you right now so that you get a feel for how jumbled the context is as we begin. By the way, chapters 40 through 44 all deal with after the exile, after the exile.

Chapter 37, go there real quick. Chapter 37, Zedekiah, son of Josiah, became king instead of Kunya, son of Jehoiakim, for King Nebuchadnezzar, or Nebuchadrezzar, as it says, of Babylon set him up as king over the land of Judah. And this ascension to the throne of Zedekiah has to be studied in association with Jeremiah 52 because they both deal with the same context.

Now, what are we to do? Go to chapter 51 because I just mentioned 52 was the ascension to the throne of Zedekiah. 52, 1 is Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king. I want you to back up to verse 64 of Jeremiah 51.

Jeremiah 51, verse 64, and say, thus shall Babylon sink and never rise again because of the disaster that I will bring upon it, and nations shall have wearied themselves for fire. Thus far, the words of Jeremiah. And we still aren't finished with the book of Jeremiah.

Now, in Hebrew, it says, and until here are the words of Jeremiah, which seems to indicate that that which follows, or let me put it as a question rather than a declarative statement, does this suggest that the words of Jeremiah end at 51, 64, and 52 and following is not the words of Jeremiah. And by the way, there are other difficulties. Chapter 46 through 51 of Jeremiah are all oracles against the nations.

Chapter 46 through 51, we'll get to that, are oracles against the nation, against Moab, and the Ammonites, and the Edomites, and so forth and so on. But the difficulty is, where do they go? See, we're reshuffling everything, and it's not because I just want to make this complicated. I certainly don't.

In fact, it's contrary to that. It's the opposite. I want to actually put it in order so it makes sense, and we understand the last 40 years before the destruction.

But where do they go, these oracles of the nations? They're seemingly just stuck here like everything else in Jeremiah, not necessarily in the order in which they were given. What we do know is this based on examples from Qumran and the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. By the way, the Septuagint, the Greek version, is one-eighth smaller than the Hebrew version, the Masoretic text as we have it in our Bibles.

But there in the Septuagint, the oracles against the nations occur after chapter 25. Now, we're going to have to figure this out. We have to go in.

We have to figure out the order if we're going to understand it. Imagine if you had a book. Let's say you took this book.

I just wanted to use one of my tricky things. You that are here have to turn around and look at it on the screen. That's called the Moses Scroll, that book right there.

Now, what if you pick that book up? I put a lot into trying to get it arranged in a way that makes sense. What if you started on chapter 11, and you read 11. What if somebody called me and said, Ross, what's the best way to read your book and really get it? I said, okay, get a pencil out.

I want you to start in chapter 11. I want you to read chapter 11, and then chapter 14, and then 18, and then read 3, 2, 5, then go to 8, and then read chapter 21, and then you're going to get it. I mean, you're going to get it, but it's not going to flow.

You see, when you put it in the right order, when you put it in the right order, and let's go back to talking about Jeremiah, it makes sense. You read it, and you say, ah, that happened, and then this happened, and then the word of the Lord told him this, and then the word of the Lord told him that. But if you read the book as it is presently organized, guess what? You're not going to get it.

People tell me, you know, man, some of this stuff is just too hard to understand. Well, I guess so. Let's get it in order first.

Now, there are a few other details that we have to sort out. Now, remember I said chapter 40 through 44 concern time after the exile, but in your mind, you might say, okay, after the exile, that means they're exiled in the 11th year of Zedekiah, but did you know that there are actually three exiles, and the book of Jeremiah tells us about them. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 52.

Now, a lot of people don't know this. Why? Because they don't read their Bible. Jeremiah 52, and I want you to look with me at verse 27.

Jeremiah 52, 27. The king of Babylon had them struck down and put to death at Riblah in the region of Hamath. Thus Judah was exiled from its land.

Ready? This is the number of those whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled in the seventh year. Do we have a date for that? I do. Yes, we do.

3,023 Judeans. All right, so 3,023 were exiled, and then verse 29, in the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, I have a date for that, 832 persons were exiled from Jerusalem. And then, in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar, the chief of the guards, exiled 745 Judeans.

(1:03:35 - 1:04:34)

The total amounted to 4,600 persons. 4,600. The number of those whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled in the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans.

Now, you can't just look at this text. Do we have this account somewhere else? Yes, we do. In 2 Kings, hold your hand here, you're going to need it.

2 Kings 24, this is why you have to look at things in context. 2 Kings 24, beginning in I think it's verse 14. Yeah, here we go.

2 Kings 24, 14. He exiled all of Jerusalem, all the commanders and all the warriors, 10,000 exiles. Wait a minute, I thought it was 3,023.

(1:04:34 - 1:07:37)

As well as all the craftsmen and smiths, only the poorest of the people in the land were left. He deported Jehoiakim to Babylon, and the king's wives and the officers and the notables of the land were brought as exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon. All the able men, to the number of 7,000, all of them warriors trained for battle, and 1,000 craftsmen and smiths were brought to Babylon as exiles by the king of Babylon.

Okay, so the numbers don't agree between 2 Kings 24 and Jeremiah 52, but remember, Jeremiah 51 tells us, thus far the words of Jeremiah, meaning that chapter 52 is not part of Jeremiah, at least according to the writer of Jeremiah 51, 64. Now, by the way, if you look at 2 Kings 25, verse 8, while you're right here, on the seventh day of the fifth month, that was the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, the chief of the guards and officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. Now, that says it's in the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, but Jeremiah 52, verse 29 says it's the 18th year.

So, we have a few problems. Okay, but we can sort this out, but we have to consider all of our sources. Listen, there are a lot of difficulties in these texts.

You have to weigh the evidence, and you have to give weight to certain passages over others. We have different sources, and thank God that we do. If everything lined up just perfect as my Baptist preacher told me it did back in the 70s, you know, I'd be a little suspect now.

I want the divergent sources. I want things to not be exactly right at times. I know some of you are saying, well, I don't.

Well, you have to learn to like it, I guess. By the way, what day on the Hebrew calendar was the temple destroyed? Now, people often point this out. The second temple, Herod's temple, was destroyed by Titus when? The ninth of the fifth month, the ninth of Av.

And there's a big deal in Jewish tradition that not only was the second temple destroyed on the ninth of Av, but the first temple as well, and many other tragedies befall the Jewish people on the ninth of Av. Well, it depends on how particular you want to get. We have the story of the final destruction in three biblical sources.

(1:07:37 - 1:08:23)

Those sources are 2 Kings 25 verses 1 through 12, Jeremiah chapter 39 verse 1 through 10, and Jeremiah 52 verse 4 through 16, all describe the end of the end of the end. In Jeremiah 52, 12, it says the temple is burned on the 10th of Av. If you go to 2 Kings 25 verse 8, it says it was on the 7th of Av.

Now, some people are saying, so what? Who cares? It's a couple of days. Honestly, if you really look at it, I imagine that it took a few days. From the 7th through the 10th, I'm sure that the temple was on fire.

(1:08:26 - 1:11:10)

So, it's not that big of a deal, but I'm just saying we have to also look at what does the data tell us? What are the dates? What can we factor in? As we build a timeline, let's be specific. I want to note in my spreadsheet that according to the writer of 2 Kings 25 verse 8, the end of the end came on the 7th of Av. The end of the end, according to Jeremiah 52, was the 10th of Av.

Look, the ninth is covered in there, all right? I didn't bring that up to cause problems, but rather to say let's pay attention to detail. Now, in order to sort these kind of things out, we have to carefully and critically study the text. Listen, you have to be honest to Jeremiah.

We have to be honest historians. We can't, I'm sorry to say it, but traditional views that don't line up with the text have got to go. There is no place for lying and covering up for difficulties that we find in the text.

We have to challenge, we have to face these head-on, and by looking critically and carefully and analytically at the text, many times we can solve the discrepancies, we can solve the problems. We have to look carefully at the text of Jeremiah. We have to look at that in association with a careful view of Kings and Chronicles as well.

We have to take each period, the Kings of Judah and their times, and we have to determine what we can know from Jeremiah, Kings, and Chronicles. So, if I'm looking, and I'm going to begin next week with the days of Josiah, particularly the days of Josiah during which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, looking at the days of Josiah when God is speaking to Jeremiah. But what we're looking for specifically, so I have to begin our first real, after this class, our next study, I should say, is going to deal with that 19-year window that goes from the 13th year of Josiah's reign until the 31st year of his reign when he dies by an archer in Necho's Egyptian army.

(1:11:12 - 1:12:37)

I want to look for words that were spoken, prophecies that were proclaimed, events that took place during that 19-year window. Things, words that were spoken, prophecies proclaimed, and events that took place after that 19-year window, I'm not interested in right now. I mean, I am interested in them right now, but I'm not, for the purpose of this class, I don't want to talk about them.

I want to get it in order. In short, Bechitzer, we will focus from 627 BCE until 609 BCE, and there's some very important material that takes place in that 19-year window. Now, to narrow our focus even more, this is my final wind-down to prep you for next week.

2 Kings 22.1 and 2 Chronicles 34.1 tell us Josiah became king at 8 years old, and he reigned for 31 years. That doesn't take a great math skill to tell you that he's dead at 39. Begins when he's eight, serves, reigns for 31.

(1:12:38 - 1:13:32)

We then are informed by 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34 that he did what was right in the Lord's eyes, walked in all the ways of David, and didn't turn to the right or the left. We learn from the chronicler that at 16 years old, in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek David's God. Now, that would have put it at 632.

632 BCE, 16 years old, eighth year of his reign, he begins to seek the God of David, his father. In the 20th year of his life, the 12th year of his reign, he begins a purge. At 20 years old, it's 628 BCE, he begins to purge Judah and Jerusalem of all sorts of idolatry and ashram and so forth and so on.

(1:13:34 - 1:15:14)

And then both Kings and Chronicles put us in a six-year gap. Chronicles tells us in the 12th year of his reign, and then the next thing we hear from Kings or Chronicles says, and in the 18th year of his reign, there's six years of gap. Now, I told you last week, one of the things that plugs in there, remember the 12th year he begins to purge, 13th year of his reign, across town, listen, here's what Jeremiah hears, Yirmeyahu, Yirmeyahu ben Hilchiyahu, Yirmeyahu.

Now, that happens in the 13th year of his reign. Now, let me give you a couple of other historical data points that we know. Josiah, by the time this happens, the sixth year of his reign, this is two years before he begins to seek God, he has a baby.

That's right, young Josiah. And I have to tell you about how young he is as a father because of something about Jeremiah and figuring out some of the... You got to know this. So, you can do the math.

Here's the way you do the math. You find the beginning, you read this later in Jeremiah, the beginning of the reign of so-and-so, and they were this many years old and you count backwards. So, let's say Jehoiakim took the throne and he was 23 years old and you go, okay, I know when he took the reign and I'm going to go 23, 22, 21, 20, 19, 18, 17.

(1:15:14 - 1:16:08)

You go all the way back and you got it on your spreadsheet if you're a great Bible student and you see how old Josiah is and you say, so at 14 years old in the sixth year of his reign, Josiah's woman named Zvidah, the daughter of Padaiah of Ruma, gave him a son. He's 14 years old, daddy Josiah, and they bring to him his boy Eliakim, whose name also is Jehoiakim, 14-year-old Josiah. Now, in the ninth year of his reign, his wife Hamutah, he's got another woman, he's a young guy but he's got lots of women, Hamutah, daughter of Jeremiah of Livnah, gave him a son named Yehoahaz and Josiah was 17.

(1:16:09 - 1:17:07)

So, when Josiah, by the time Josiah is 21 years old with at least two wives and two boys, he's seeking the God of David, his father, he's begun a purge and family life is getting a little complicated. While that's going on, a priest from the Levitical town of Anatote in the land of Benjamin heard the voice of the Lord. He would prophesy for 19 years of the reign of the most righteous king.

I said that on purpose. I know other people say, what about David, what about Hezekiah? Let me finish. According to the writer of 2 Kings, the most righteous king ever, no one before him could compare and certainly no one after him.

(1:17:07 - 1:19:25)

His name was Josiah. And get this, we have no record that Josiah ever met Jeremiah and we don't even know if he knew who Jeremiah was. Now, I know people are thinking, well, no, he certainly had to know.

Did he? We're going to look, we're going to see if the text provides any evidence whether or not he knew even who Jeremiah was. And let me tell you this, Jeremiah of Anatote was not the only one to whom the word of the Lord came during his reign. Listen to this.

The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah, son of Cushi, son of Gedalia, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, during the reign of King Josiah, son of Ammon of Judah. How many of you knew that? The prophet Zephaniah plugs in chronologically to this period of time which the biblical writers tell us is a 31-year reign. Now, the question is, is there anything in Zephaniah that fits within the first 12 years of Josiah's reign during which Jeremiah is not getting the word of the Lord yet? Or do their prophecy careers, their prophetic careers overlap? Were they going at the same time? What we know is within a 31-year period, there were at least, at least two men on the ground to whom the word of the Lord was coming during the reign of Josiah.

(1:19:27 - 1:20:25)

What can we learn about prophecy in the days of Josiah? What did God tell Jeremiah and when? What did God tell Zephaniah and when? And please get this, did the messages ever reach Josiah? 31 years reign, prophecy all around him. Two prophets active in his days, each of these earning a place among the books of Israel's sacred scriptures. And we have to ask the question, did those messages ever reach Josiah? Hey, join me next Saturday for Prophecy in the Days of Josiah.

(1:20:26 - 1:20:45)

Our task is to begin to find the word of the Lord that came between 640 and 609 BCE. And let me tell you, I need you here. I'm going to need you to help me.

Shabbat Shalom. Shavua Tov.