

Context and Clarity - The Prophet Jeremiah: 7

(0:24 - 13:06)

All right, good morning. In order to understand a text, in order to understand the text, we must have context. We need context in order to provide clarity for that which we're studying, because context is going to give us the circumstances that form the setting, if you will, for an event, an idea, or in the case of our present study, the meaning of prophetic words.

We need that context, and particularly in biblical studies, I think that this is important, and I think too often people don't understand the context of what they're reading, and so they might get some value out of the words that they read, they might have an interpretation which feeds their soul, they might have something which gives them solace, something that provides inspiration in their personal life, but that's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is, how do we take the words of the biblical text, understand them in such a way that we can place ourselves in the audience of the original pronouncement, if you will. So I want to take us through a little bit of a brief study this morning before I get into the main part of my class.

I want to demonstrate how important it is for us to understand the context of a given idea or prophecy or section of the biblical text. So I want to say this. In order to understand the Bible, you have to read it, yes? But you have to read it in context.

We need to know when we look at a particular text, the who, what, when, where, why. We have to know who is speaking, who is it that is the audience of the intended words. Sometimes it helps us to know where the speaker is, and is the message conveyed to an audience right there at that time? Or is it speaking to an audience at another time? Perhaps it's speaking about another place than the place where the utterance comes forward.

We have to get all of these details, and we need to try our best to understand the motive or the motivation behind a given text. We have to see why would a writer say a certain thing a certain way? And a lot of times if we understand the context, the circumstances at the time, those things become very clear. In fact, last week I talked about Isaiah chapter 6. In Isaiah chapter 6, we get this story where Isaiah says that he's in the throne room, and he begins to describe this angelic, this vision that he receives at the time.

One of the things that stands out is, and I brought this up last week, I'll touch on it again today, he says that it's in the year that King Uzziah dies. In the year that King Uzziah dies. Now here's what we know from that.

These are examples in understanding the context. What we know from that is quite a bit, actually. We know that if we look at Isaiah chapter 1, that he is a prophet in the days of Uzziah, Jotam, Ahaz, and Hezekiyahu.

So we know if those are the four kings that he serves as a prophet to, or if his prophetic career touches those four kings of Judah, then we know that the vision in Isaiah 6 comes early in his prophetic career, right? Because it says it's in the year that Uzziah died. So it's at the end of Uzziah's reign, and it's about to be the next king takes over, right? Jotam. So we can kind of get that kind of thing straight.

Now go with me this morning. I'm gonna go through a couple of these examples, because it's going to help me present what I want to share with you today. Go to Micah chapter 1, verse 1. These are the words, or the word of the Lord which came to Micah of Moresheth, is the way that the English reads, in the days of Jotam, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and which he saw regarding Samaria and Jerusalem.

So you see how we can kind of, we set off if we're studying Micah, and we get certain things in context right away. We know that Micah, we could do a little research and find out what does it mean when it calls him the Morashti, right? The translation here says of Moresheth, like it's a place. But we also know that his prophetic career touches three kings of Judah.

Jotam, Ahaz, Hezekiah. But if you break that down and you say, okay, well these three are kings of Judah, which we read, but notice that the message concerns Samaria and Jerusalem. So we get this idea that yes, he's probably dealing with the the kingdom of Judah, but his prophecies deal with both.

Now the other thing that should stand out is, because he is a prophet at the time of Jotam, Ahaz, Hezekiah, his prophetic ministry overlaps Isaiah. So if we're really trying to understand the time, the circumstances, the context, then we have to look at, well, if I read Isaiah and I read, if I'm studying Isaiah, then quite possibly I'll need to also incorporate studies from Micah. I'll give you an example.

Isaiah chapter 2 and Micah chapter 4 have what is basically the same prophecy. In days to come the house, the mountain of the Lord's house, will be exalted above all nations, etc. Nations will flow to it, you know, I'm paraphrasing.

Okay, now those prophecies are almost identical, and when we recognize that the prophecy comes to Isaiah and to Micah, we can make several deductions. Let me give you one. If Micah gets it and Isaiah gets it, it probably doesn't take place in the days of Uzziah, right? Not in the earliest part of Isaiah's ministry.

How could I say that? Isaiah chapter 2, that's almost immediately into Isaiah, and so we have to think, wait a minute now, maybe that particular prophecy goes later because Micah gets it as well, and he's not a prophet at the time, right? These are just ideas. I'm just throwing out ways to begin to look at the text. Now, this is the thing that I want to talk about today, is context.

What can we know? What do we know? What does the text tell us? Let me give you another example. Go with me to Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel. Let's go to chapter 1, verse 1. Ezekiel 1 1, that came about in the 30th year on the fifth day of the fourth month while I was by the river Chabar among the exiles the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

This is Ezekiel. Now the person will switch to third person. Notice here it says, while I was by the river Chabar.

Notice that verse number 2, on the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiakim's exile, Jehoiakim's exile, the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, third person, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chabar, and there the hand of

the Lord came upon him. Okay, pretty specific, but I'm talking about context. So you go, I'm gonna study, this is me, let's say I say, I'm gonna study Ezekiel.

Can't just study Ezekiel. What I want you to see is, if I want to understand everything about this prophecy which begins in chapter 1, you know, all the visions that take place there, I want to put it in context. So I want to say, wait a minute, the fifth year of Jehoiakim, what do I know about Jehoiakim? What do I know about his exile? Jehoiakim is a son of Josiah.

Jehoiakim, right, we know when he assumed the throne. He assumes the throne in 597 BCE, quickly dethroned and taken into exile. We know this from 2nd King chapter 24 verses 8 through 17.

So if I want to know about the fifth year of Jehoiakim, also known as Jeconiah, if I want to know about the exile, I need to get that background. All of this is going to give me context. What this means for me and for all Bible students is, I can tell you that the prophecy of Ezekiel 1 can be dated to 592 BCE.

Now what's going on in 592 BCE? You see what I'm trying to tell you is that we can open up the scriptures and we can look around, and we can go, ah, wait a minute. I mean it's fun to get into Ezekiel and you go, I looked and behold a high wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing intermittently, then a bright light around it, and people jump in and they're worried about the wheel within the wheel in there. I want to say, wait a minute, hold, take a break.

When is this? Where's the river Chabar? What is Ezekiel saying? Who is Jehoiakim? I want to know, inquiring mind. And a lot of the details that we get from context, we're going to understand more of what we read if we can fill out the gaps, right? That's what I'm trying to do. Now sometimes key events will help us, like the fifth year of Jehoiakim's exile.

We can really nail down and get specific. Sometimes it's not so easy, but sometimes it is. Sometimes the writer includes things that you ought to know.

He assumes the reader knows. So for instance, if I'm Isaiah and I'm writing, and I want to be specific, and I'll go, I want to tell the people about this vision I had, and I want them to know when it was, so I go, in the year that Uzziah died. So yeah, I remember that.

We do this in our time too. If I said, somebody goes, well when was that? And you go, it was the year that Kennedy was shot. Now, most people can give you the date.

Most people know the date that Kennedy was shot, even if they can't. Like some of you listening to me are probably really young, and you're like, well I have no idea. I'd have to, God said he.

(13:07 - 20:44)

Anyway, but the idea is that if you don't know, it gives you a marker. It gives you something that you can open up. It's like all of these details are important, right? You could say, two years, if I want to write a historical document and I can say, this happened in Boston two years after the young country of America had declared its independence, or whatever.

Because then a reader who knows, they go, oh well I know the year that America declared its independence. It gets you into the text. This is my point.

These kind of clues are what we're looking for. I'll give you another one. Go with me to Amos, the book of Amos chapter one.

Some of you said, wait a minute, I thought we're studying Jeremiah. The man had mentioned Jeremiah. Stick with me.

Watch. Amos chapter one, the words of Amos, who was among the sheep herders from Tekoa. By the way, Amos is one of my favorite prophets.

I just love Amos. We'll get to that later. From Tekoa, when he saw visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

All right? Well, I have questions. First thing I want to do is I want to say, okay, Amos is a sheep herder, he's in Tekoa, but he has these visions come to him. There are two kings mentioned, Uzziah of Judah.

All right? Now if I know what I just said earlier, remember Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 6, in the year that Uzziah died, so I can put Amos at least partially touching Isaiah's time. Right? So, but he goes, he gives us more detail. He sees the visions when Uzziah is king of Judah.

Now the dates, people can go back and forth, and every expert behind me, I have a whole shelf of people that have cracked, they swear to heaven that they have cracked the code on the co-regencies, and they know all of the secrets, and they've figured out what king was king when, and every one of them are different. But anyway, but they at least all have a strong opinion. So I know that according to some, Uzziah, it's 8th century BCE, some say 785 to 733, give or take 10-20 years, either way.

Now while Uzziah is king of Judah, in Israel, in the north, you have another king named Jeroboam, the son of Joash. So now these two kings reigns overlap, so that gives me a bar, a window. I can go, I could do this on a graph, I've actually done this, and all of these guys here have two that write these books on it.

And then, but now I've got one more marker to put in, he gives me something specific, he says two years before the earthquake. Now that's written in such a way, I don't think anybody in the 8th century said, talking about earthquake, what earthquake? I think this was something which was a big, big deal, and in fact it was. Fact it was.

It was such a big deal that hundreds of years later, people are talking about this very earthquake. Let me show you. Go with me to Zechariah, the prophet Zechariah.

Zechariah 14, and I just want to read, let's start in verse 3, just because I want you to, because he's going to refer to this, he's going to make a prophecy, many of you know this prophecy, and he's going to give the same marker. Watch. 14, Zechariah verse 3. Then the Lord, Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh, will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.

On that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west, forming a very large valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north, the other half toward the south, and you will flee by the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel. Yes, you will flee just as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.

Okay, now do you see all the detail that are packed into those few verses? It gives me a historical event. He's saying that one day that this is going to take place, and the Lord's feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, this is not a Messiah, by the way, it's not pictured, right? In context, it's Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh, but that's a whole other class. But whatever is going to happen, the feet are going to be there, and it's going to split, and he goes, let me tell you how bad it's going to be.

It's going to be just like that earthquake in the days of Uzziah. Now here's what we know. You know, there are geological studies, scientific studies of the tectonic plates, and that you can google the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, and there are scientific evidences put forth that this took place approximately 760 BCE.

Well, that happens to fall into the reign of Uzziah, and let me tell you, it fits every one of these people who don't agree. That 760 marker, that fits. It also fits, archaeologically, we know that in the land of Israel, even minimalist scholars, when they do archaeological work, they'll say there was a major earthquake in the 8th century BCE, and we know this by signs of destruction from north to south, and also in Jordan, you know, in Transjordan, we see the similar damage in the 8th century.

But what I'm saying is, is that, and if you say, if you press them, because I did, I went and read their reports, if you press these archaeologists, you go, hey, can you tell me when that particular earthquake took place? Can you give me more of a specific date? You said 8th century BCE, they'll say about 750 BCE. In other words, the archaeology confirms there's a massive earthquake, 750 to 760 BCE. All of these things come together to help us form a better picture.

(20:46 - 21:58)

Now, it's in the days of Uzziah. Let me give you one example. We're about ready to start our class today, by the way.

Oh, this is just kind of a warm-up. Go with me to Isaiah 24. Isaiah 24, and I want to read verse 18.

Isaiah 24, verse 18. By the way, this is a part of Isaiah, which is a part of Isaiah which is called like an apocalypse. Very interesting stuff here.

But here, listen to this. Isaiah 24, 18. Then it will be that the one who flees the sound of terror will fall into the pit, and the one who climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare, for the windows above are open, the foundations of the earth shake, the earth is broken apart, the earth is split through, the earth is shaken violently, the earth trembles like a heavy drinker, always sways like a hut, for its wrongdoing is heavy upon it, it will fall never to rise again.

(21:59 - 23:37)

So will it happen on that day. Now, this is looking, this is a prophetic vision, but my question to you is, if I'm Isaiah and I'm looking for a way to describe the cataclysmic event, do I have anything in my day that I would bring to my memory that I would write about? Now, Isaiah is a prophet during the time of Uzziah's reign. Now, we think that Isaiah started about 740.

Let's say that the earthquake took place in 760 BCE. That's 20 years. This thing, evidently, this was such a major earthquake in the days of Isaiah, you think he could have referred to it? 20 years? Now that I'm getting older, 20 years is nothing.

Let me ask you this, what if I said, what if I wanted to tell you, let's say I'm writing something, say, catastrophe was as bad as that which befell the Twin Towers. Everybody know what I'm talking about? Realize that was over 20 years ago. Can you imagine it like it was yesterday? What if I told you that the billowing clouds were high and the rescue workers were going into the dangerous place? People couldn't see for days because of the cloud.

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The cloud could be, you see, I could paint this picture and everyone here would say, that's been two decades. But here, now let's go forward. Let's say it's 2,500 years.

(23:59 - 25:03)

What if I made a remark 2,500 years from now and I said, the day the Twin Towers were struck? Somebody reading that might say, now I can see the scholars 2,500 years from now and they'd say, the Twin Towers were two buildings that were situated in, or they could have been two gates at the entry to a city, or they could have been, because people don't get the context. You have to understand, when Isaiah talks about an earthquake, I can tell you one earthquake that's on his mind. It's the earthquake that took place in the days of Uzzah.

Israel, the land, the Levant in that area, it's sitting on a fault line, you know, though a lot of times tour guides will say, it's been a while. We, one to 200 years, every so often we have major earthquakes here. Now, people, geologists, have said that this earthquake, they suspect it was well over an eight.

(25:05 - 25:38)

It's a major, major earthquake. You get the idea. What I'm saying is that in order to understand a text, now is Isaiah 24 talking about the earthquake that took place in the days of Uzzah? That's not what I'm saying.

What I'm saying is, is that as he predicts cataclysm, he's drawing upon the events of his time, and we have to get that. Now, let me tell you this. If you study Kings and Chronicles during the time of Uzzah, guess what's not mentioned? This earthquake.

(25:39 - 30:53)

You read Kings and Chronicles, and you read about the time of Uzzah, you would think that it would tell you about this earthquake. So my point is, sometimes the purpose of a given writer is not to bring in every single thing, but I want you to see that if you're going to study

Isaiah, you need to read Kings and Chronicles and Micah and all of those prophets that can bring to the table various elements will paint the picture for you. Got it? Y'all ready to start? How far is it? Oh yeah, this is perfect.

I couldn't have timed that better if I tried. Okay, well, we're not talking right now about Isaiah and Amos and maybe a little bit of Ezekiel if I decide to put that in, but what we're talking about are the days of Josiah, particularly from the 13th year of his reign until the 31st year of his reign when he dies. We're looking at a 19-year window of time.

You take 31 years and you say, I only want to focus on 19. Why is that? Because Yirmiyahu, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, from the priest at Anatot, from the line which has been cut off because Solomon was angry that Abiatar sided with the wrong candidate elections that year, we're looking at this is when Jeremiah's prophetic career begins, 13th year of Josiah's reign. Now we're focused in.

So we're looking for 19 years, and I want to tell you that Jeremiah has 52 chapters. You can all figure that out on your own, you don't need me. Not all of those chapters deal with those 19 years that we're looking for, and we have to understand that within the 52 chapters of Jeremiah, I've taught another class on this, they're not arranged chronologically.

So all of what I started with this morning, context, context, context, is important because some of Jeremiah says in the fourth year of Hoiyechim or in the 10th year of Zedekiah, that you can put those on the map. What do you do if you have sections of Jeremiah that don't say that? You have to say, well, is there anything in the text that doesn't, I don't have a date, but if I read this section of Jeremiah, can I go, ah, it goes here, or oh, it goes here? The answer to that is yes. Sometimes context will give us a way to put these passages in the right place.

Let me give you an example. Now last week, by the way, I started with the call of Jeremiah in chapter 1. Everybody will probably agree that that happens in the 13th year of Josiah's reign. You see how smart I am? I'm not really that smart.

I just know that it says he started his prophetic career in the 13th year, and that chapter 1, particularly verse 4 through 10, describes the call of Jeremiah. See, even though it doesn't say this happened in the 13th year, it doesn't say it like that. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 3. Jeremiah chapter 3, and I'm going to read verse 6. Then the Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah, hey, anybody want to make a wager as to what king was king when the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah? Now, what we don't know is, remember, we know he's Jeremiah's prophet for 19 years of Josiah's reign.

Does this happen early, middle of the 19 years, or at the end of the 19 years? We don't know yet. But would you agree, at least, that this happens in the days of Josiah? It's somewhere on that 19-year marker. Ready? Have you seen what faithless Israel did? What faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill, under every leafy tree, and she prostituted herself there.

He's talking about the northern kingdom. So my Jewish friends can say, yeah, that's the north. You know how they were.

(30:53 - 33:16)

Wait a minute. Yet I thought, after she's done all these things, she'll return to me. But she didn't return.

And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I sent her away and given her a certificate of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah didn't fear.

She went and prostituted herself also. And because of the thoughtlessness of her prostitution, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. These are vivid images, by the way.

And yet in the spite of all this, her treacherous sister Judah didn't return to me with all her heart, but rather in deception, declares the Lord. Now, all I know, now, first of all, well, let me not distract myself. All I know is that this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah.

It's somewhere in that 19-year window when the two of them overlapped. Is it early? Is it in the middle? Is it late? Don't know yet, but I've got some questions that come up. Now, one of the questions is, how far does this word that came to him in the days of Josiah go? Let me make this a little bit more complicated.

We know that Jeremiah chapter 1 is dealing with the beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic career, and that is the 13th year of Josiah. So are we to assume then that chapter 1 verse 1 up through Jeremiah 3 verse 6 and following is all the days of Josiah? Remember I already told you that some of this isn't in order, but is that safe to assume? Okay, listen to this. Never assume anything when you read the text.

Why? Because you don't have to. Sometimes you have to. But try to deduce everything you can from context.

(33:16 - 40:22)

Now, here's what I do know. Let me ask you this. If I keep reading, this is all related.

Look at the Lord said to me, faithless Israel has proved herself to be more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words to the north. Who's he talking to? He's going to the north.

He's talking to Israel. Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look at you in anger, for I'm gracious, declares the Lord.

I'll not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your wrongdoing, that you've revolted against the Lord your God, scattered your favor to the strangers under every leafy tree. All of this is connected, right? So if we keep reading, we say, well, all of this happens in the days of Josiah, right? I mean, I'm okay with that.

Now watch this. Says, then I'll give you shepherds, verse 15, after my own heart, who will feed you knowledge and understanding, and it shall be in those days when you become numerous and are fruitful in the land, declares the Lord, that they will no longer say the ark

of the covenant of the Lord. It will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor miss it, nor will another be made again.

Now, the clue. I think, with good reason, one thing to say, I think, I think with good reason, that the people of that day, during the days of Josiah, when this prophecy is uttered, you know what they're saying? They're saying that they, the ark of the covenant of the Lord, it's in their mind, they do remember it, they do miss it, and they do want another one. You see how I'm getting that? Because he's saying, look, time is coming when this is not going to be the case, the text is telling me that it is the case now.

So what does that tell me? The days of Josiah, the ark is, I thought it's supposed to be in the temple. Class, I just want you to get it. See, you're not, if the ark is there, and it's not missed, and it's not, you're not going to go, boy, I'm looking forward to a day when I won't miss this thing, you know? Now, I know people are saying, well, it could be there, and he's just saying, no, it's not.

All right, stick with me. Now, what I do know is, how far does this go? You can read through chapter three, and four, and five, and you can almost say all of this seems to be pretty connected. Let me tell you what happens.

When you get to chapter seven, I know something. I know something that I need to tell you. Chapter seven is no longer the days of Josiah.

In fact, I can tell you when it is. Chapter seven equals chapter 26. If you take Jeremiah 7, you print it out, or you write it by hand, which makes you learn it better, write it by hand, chapter 7, you write by hand chapter 26, and you take a highlighter, and you begin to note they're the same.

This is Jeremiah's great temple sermon. God thought it was great. Jeremiah probably wouldn't say, I think it's great.

The priest didn't like it at all. The religious authorities, and I'm talking about the real religious authorities, I'm not talking about some pagan, non-Judaic group. This is the, this is supposed to be the real, they hate it.

The temple sermon, chapter 7, chapter 26. So, what we know is that if three, chapter 3, verse 6, is in the days of Josiah, we have to try to figure out what else is Josiah's days, but we do know that chapter 7 and 26 is at the beginning of Jehoiakim, with an m, Jehoiakim's reign. We're going to do that later.

Now the question becomes, next question, what about before chapter 3, verse 6? If I go and I read chapter 1, and I go all the way through chapter 2, and I get into chapter 3, verses 1 through 5, how much of that is the days of Josiah? Well, you're going to have to learn context in order to put those in the right order. Here's something else. You do know, you should know, because we've covered this in a class, that everything that I'm talking about, chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, all the way down, keep going, keep going, that Jeremiah doesn't write anything, anything until 23 years into his prophetic ministry.

Nothing. Now you go, how do you? Well, I'm just, I'm textual. I want to, what does the Bible say? And it says very clearly, we know the time in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, that's when God said, hey Jeremiah, Jerry, I need you to write down everything that I've said to you from the time I first spoke to you until now.

Now when is that? In the fourth year of Jehoiakim. It's the 23rd year. He says, listen, 23rd year of Jeremiah's prophecies, you write down everything I told you, because he hadn't written it yet.

So he writes it down. You ever hear people cast aspersions on a certain text and they'll say, well that wasn't written for decades until after decades of, and so how do we know it's accurate? What if I ask you right now, take a piece of paper and write down your memories of 9-11. Could you do it? Could you give me some facts? Get some things right? Yep.

Now, what if God told you in your ear? You think you could get it better? Probably so. So the idea is that he is writing two decades later, but he writes it down. Remember the story in chapter 36 of Jeremiah? We covered this in a previous class.

It's brought to the king, the king has a guy there, they're reading it, take a razor, slash off a few columns of text, cast it in the fire, so he burns it up. Jeremiah has to write it again and add a few bells and whistles for the king that did that to his scroll. We know, we know that Jeremiah, the book as we have it, is not chronological.

(40:23 - 43:28)

But let me ask you this, is there anything in the days of Josiah that would help us, like a major thing, like let's say in the days of Uzziah, there was this really, really big earthquake. You know, you could, you have to ask yourself, is there anything big, a 9-11, a catastrophe, something big in the days of Josiah? Oh, what about, what about this really, really, really big religious reform? Is there a religious reform that was so great, according to the writer of Kings and Chronicles, it was so great that there'd never been anything like it. You go, what about Hezekiah? Nope, pales in comparison.

Read 2 Kings 23-25 about Josiah. This is the best thing ever. Josiah was the most righteous king, he had a big revival, they had a Passover.

Let me tell you about the They had this Passover in the time of Josiah that was, it was so incredibly perfect, there was nothing that had ever happened like it since the days of Samuel, one account, or the days of the judges in the other account. This is, it's been the biggest thing, and then there's this reform, and it goes, and Josiah orders, they go throughout the land, they rid the land of all the idols and bash things and burn things, and all of this is going on, all the people, by the way, this is in the 18th year of Josiah's reign, 18th year of Josiah's reign, this takes place. It's all prompted by the discovery of the original scroll of Moses, by the way, we'll talk about that in a minute, but this is big, big, big, big, big, big, I'm telling you, it's major.

The religious reform, the super-duper Passover, there was nothing like it. Now, in fact, let me just give you a little bit here. Go to 2 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 34, let me give you a little bit of setting in Josiah's time.

This is context, people, you need context. 2 Chronicles 34, 2, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, walked in the ways of his father David, didn't turn his side to the right or the left. In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father, and in the twelfth year, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the cast metal images.

(43:28 - 47:30)

So, one year, five years before Jeremiah becomes a prophet, remember, we know Zephaniah is a prophet during the days of Josiah as well, but this is big. So, let's look at Jeremiah, five years before he first hears the word of the Lord, you got Josiah seeking God, just like his father David, he doesn't turn to the right or the left. One year before Jeremiah hears the word of the Lord, there's this major purge, they're bashing idols, they're burning Asherim, I mean, this is big, this is big, this is going on.

You ought to be able to look out your window. If you're Jeremiah, you ought to go, hey, there goes Josiah again, look at, boy, he's doing a good job, he's tearing up all those idols. Hey, own it.

That's what you ought to see in Jeremiah. Now, go down to 2 Chronicles 34, 32, 2 Chronicles 34, 32, says this, look at verse 31, the king stood in his place, made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord to keep his commandments, his testimonies, his statutes with all his heart, with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this scroll, talking about the scroll they found. Furthermore, he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin stand with him, so the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

You're like, wow, so he not only does he commit to following God and getting his life straight and being holy and righteous, but he has all the people there do it too. Look at this, verse 33, Josiah removed all the abomination from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel, made all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. Throughout his lifetime, they did not turn from following the Lord God of their fathers.

Throughout his lifetime, they did not turn from following the Lord God of their fathers. Thus says the official record from the government. Now, here's a question, this in the 18th year of Josiah's reign, 622 BCE, he's not going to die until his 31st year, so that means if we read the account here, now Kings doesn't have this account, all Kings tells us is that the people did take on the covenant, but it doesn't get into how perfect everything was for all his days.

It just says, you know, they raised their hand, covenant thing, but this suggests that from year 622 BCE until Neco kills him on a battlefield, that during that window, right, now remember Jeremiah has been a prophet for five years when the scroll was found. He starts in the 13th year, here's the word of the Lord, scrolls found the 18th year, that's five years, six years. I'm not a math teacher, don't learn math from me, stick with the Bible.

From the 13th year to the 18th year, right, he's a prophet. When the scroll is found, by the way, nobody says anything about go talk to Jeremiah or Zephaniah, they go to Huldah. Huldah says, yes, bad stuff's coming, but don't worry, king, you're going to go to your grave in peace.

He goes to the grave with an arrow, but I guess some people might call that peaceful, I wouldn't. Interestingly, Chronicles tells us that it's beautiful outside. Look out your window, Jer, you'll see how perfect things are, but that's not what Jeremiah sees.

(47:31 - 59:45)

Now, I need to open this picture up, because I've got questions. I read Kings and Chronicles, I read Jeremiah, I read Zephaniah, and I'm saying, surely, if this big event, 622 BC, scrolls discovered, revival takes place, there's bashing and burning, idols and stuff, surely that's going to be in Jeremiah, got to be. And if I don't look, I'm not going to find it, you see why I'm talking about context.

The biggest thing, in fact, if you take out of Kings and Chronicles the stuff about this revival, the scroll, and you take that out, there's not much left to talk about. 31 years of his reign, and let me tell you, if this is the 31 years, and I want to say, well, show me what the writers of Kings and Chronicles talk about on a scale of 31, how much focus is on that 18th year of his reign, but about like that, everything, it's everything, it's basically what it talks about. Now one thing that I do know is that if you read Kings and Chronicles, you get the idea that the religious establishment is corrupt as hell at this time.

It's bad. It's bad. The priesthood is off the leash.

I mean, you have a wicked and corrupt religious establishment. Now let me give you an example of something I find contextually in the story of this great religious reform that I see mentioned by Jeremiah. Let me give you this.

Go to 2 Kings 23. 23, 2 Kings 23, let me find the verse, I think it's, yeah. Verse 10, 2 Kings 23, he, meaning Hezekiah, he also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, so that no one would make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech.

So let me, according to the writer of Kings, Chronicles doesn't have this particular passage, but Kings is saying, listen, I need to tell you readers something that was going on in the days of Hezekiah, but have no fear, Hezekiah put a stop to it, and it was this, that place Topheth, and it's in the valley, the valley of the sons of Hinnom, and it was, they were offering, look, they were causing their sons and daughters to pass through the fire for Molech. They're killing their children. Right there, in Jerusalem, the Hinnom Valley, Gehenna, you talk about hell, this is why we get the idea.

It begins in Jeremiah, in his time. So what do, it's, that's, by the way, you probably know this, but Gehinnom, the Valley of Hinnom, or the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom, that's where the Greek, the rabbis do this, the New Testament, everybody starts referring to this wicked place as Gehenna, and it's because of this. It goes back to the time of Jeremiah, Josiah.

So if Josiah says, listen, the writer of Second Kings, whoever that is, some say it's Jeremiah, by the way, they say, listen, it's so bad, I gotta tell you, I gotta admit, they're killing their children in the valley of, they're offering them to Molech, a false god. You'd think maybe one of the prophets would mention this. Well, they do.

Jeremiah mentions it, too. Now, remember what we read in Kings, and Kings says, it was going on, but I put a stop to it. Not gonna do that anymore.

Now, go with me to Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 7. Now, remember, I told you, Jeremiah 7 is actually in the time after Josiah. Jeremiah 7 equals Jeremiah 26, it's about a temple sermon that takes place after Josiah. In fact, it's the time of Jehoiakim.

We're going to get into this later, but start in verse 29, Jeremiah 7 29. Here we go. Cut off your hair, throw it away, take up a song of mourning on the bare heights, for the Lord has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

By the way, this is during the time that we're dealing with, so let's look for some. Watch verse 30. For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in my sight, declares the Lord.

They have put their detestable things in the house which is called by my name to defile it. That's talking about the temple. They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley Ben-Hinom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command.

It did not come to my mind. Therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when it will no longer be called Tophet, or the valley of Ben-Hinom, but the valley of the slaughter. For they will bury in Tophet, because there is no other place the dead bodies of this people, food for the birds of the sky, food for the animals of the earth, and no one will frighten them away, meaning the scavengers.

You couldn't chase them off with a stick. All right, verse 34. Then I will eliminate from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of the groom, voice of the become a site of ruins.

At that time, no white space in the text. At that meaning, this continues, the chapters are artificial. At that time, what time? The time that he's talking about, Tophet and the burning and so forth, declares the Lord, they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its leaders, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves.

They're going to spread them out to the sun, the moon, to all the heavenly lights which they have loved, which they have served, which they have followed, which they have sought, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered nor buried, they will be like dung on the face of the earth, and death will be chosen rather than life by all the remnant that remains of this whole family, remains in all the places which I have driven them. There's the Lord of armies.

Now, the question is, does this happen after? In other words, in the days of Josiah, the 18th year of his reign, 622 BCE, has this massive revival, reform, destroys them. One of the things that he says he takes care of is this thing going on in Tophet. So one could say, you know, maybe what's described in Jeremiah 7 should be placed after 622 BCE, right? You could do that, maybe, until we get a little bit further in, but you go, well, let's put it between 622 BCE and the death of Josiah on the battlefield at Megiddo by an arrow from Necho, peaceful death that Huldah promised him.

So you gotta say somehow, maybe it's there, but go with me to Jeremiah 19, Jeremiah 19. It's important, we have to get this. Now, by the way, well, I'm gonna read it.

Verse 1, 19, this is what the Lord says, go and buy a potter's earthenware jar, take some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests, go out to the valley of Ben-Hinnom, which is in the entrance of the potsherd gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you, and say, hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah, inhabitants of Jerusalem, this is what the Lord of armies, the God of Israel says, behold, I'm going to bring a disaster on this place at which the ears of everyone that hears it will tingle, since they've abandoned me and made this place foreign, and it burns sacrifices in it to other gods that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, since they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I did not command nor speak of, it did never enter my mind. Does this remind you of Jeremiah 7? All right, stick with me. Therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when this place will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but rather the valley of slaughter.

Does that remind you of chapter 7? See how we're looking at context? I will frustrate the planning of Judah and Jerusalem in this place. I'll make them fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life, I will make their carcasses food for the birds of the sky, animals of the earth. I'm also going to turn this city into the object of horror and hissing.

Everyone who passes by it will be appalled and hiss because of all its disasters. I'm going to make them eat the flesh of their sons, flesh of their daughters, and they'll eat one another's flesh during the siege and in the hardship with which their enemies and those who seek their life will torment them. Then, if you're to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you, you'll say to them, this is what the Lord of armies says.

To the same extent, I'll break this people in this city just as one breaks a potter's vessel which cannot be repaired, and they will bury their dead in Topheth because there is no place for burial. This is how I'll treat this place and its inhabitants, declares the Lord, so as to make this city like Topheth. Houses of Jerusalem, the houses of the kings of Judah, will be defiled like the place of Topheth because of all the houses on whose rooftops they burned sacrifices through all the heavenly lights and poured out drink offerings to other gods.

Then Jeremiah came to Topheth, where the Lord had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the courtyard of the Lord's house and said to all the people, this is what the Lord of armies, the God of Israel, says. Behold, I'm going to bring on this city, all its towns, the entire disaster I've declared against it because they've stiffened their necks so as not to listen to my words. Chapter 7 and chapter 19, God is extremely angry about what's happening in Topheth.

(59:46 - 1:03:35)

They're sacrificing their children to other gods. What he says is, it's going to stop, but what's going to happen is that place is going to be used to bury them. It's not going to be room anywhere else.

The question becomes, if it was stopped by Josiah in the 18th year of his reign in 622 BCE, this either the prophecies in 7 and 19 have to be situated before the discovery of the scroll and the revival and the great Passover and the second king's 2310 verse, or the official record says the king stopped it in word, and I'm not suggesting he didn't. Maybe the king said, you got to stop that, and they didn't, or after the king dies, they resume it again. There are a lot of options, but I want you to understand that this Topheth is a big problem in the days of Josiah, and Jeremiah talks about it in chapter 7. He talks about it in chapter 19, and I'll tell you that chapter 7, at least the bulk of it, the temple sermon happens after the days of Josiah.

So I think, I think with good reason, textually supported, that this, these prophecies happen after the time of Josiah, and therefore Josiah did not effectively eradicate what happened, what was happening at Topheth in his days. Now just to back me up, Kings does suggest that even though Hezekiah was a good godly man and did everything in his power to bring about a revival and a reform, that the people didn't respond, and ultimately destruction came anyway. Remember, Jeremiah is a prophet at the time when Josiah's good is going on, and he never says, boy, you know, it's really going good now.

Everybody's doing a good job. They're going to school, studying the Torah, they're doing their prayer services, always have a minion, always doing the right thing. None of that.

He says, this place is going down. God's going to wipe this place. Zephaniah is prophesying at the same time.

He doesn't get distracted by all the reports coming out of the government saying that everything's going well. It doesn't even fade. They don't get distracted by it.

Jeremiah's first two words, 13th year of Josiah's reign, he says, God says, what do you see, Jeremiah? I see an almond branch. God says, that's right, because I'm going to hasten my word to perform it. What do you see, Jeremiah? I see a pot, like a cooking pot, tilted from the north.

That's right, because I'm going bring disaster from the north. It's bad. Now, either the people stopped, or Josiah said stop, and they didn't, or they did, and they started up after you.

But the remedy is not. It's not happening. Now, what about the discovery of the Torah in the days of Josiah? It's a big deal.

(1:03:37 - 1:05:06)

What about that? Does Jeremiah mention that? We know from 2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chronicles 34-35, that in the days of Josiah, there's a cleansing of the temple going on, a restitution and reformation, but they're actually rebuilding things that have fallen down. The temple had gone into disrepair with these other wicked kings, and now you've got a good king, and he says, let's get this place going in the right directions, clean it up. They find a scroll, Hilkiah, a priest from Anatot.

He finds in the temple the Torah, and it says in 2 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 34, he doesn't say he found a copy of the Torah. It's not like saying Ross found the Torah in his study. Of course I did.

There are a bunch of copies of the Torah, but it says he found the one that Moses wrote, the original. It would have been, yeah, depending on when you date the Exodus. Let's say it dates, you know, 900 years.

It would have looked more fresh than when we found the Dead Sea Scrolls in our generation, which were 2200 years old, you see, half that age. It's in pretty good shape. They found the Torah, the one that Moses wrote.

(1:05:06 - 1:07:57)

Now, that tells you, get this, and please don't misunderstand me. I don't want to be ambiguous. The one that Moses wrote was lost prior to this.

Well, they all had copies. I mean, everybody had their little copy, and they carried their Torah scroll to Shul every week, and no, it had been lost, and it was found again, lost and found. Now, my question is, is there anything in Jeremiah or Zephaniah that would say the Torah that was lost is found? Because that'd be a big deal.

If I could show you that, everybody ought to have to say, you don't have to tell me, and you ought to say, that was pretty interesting. If we can show it. So, the way I look for something is, I say, well, the thing I need is a key word, but let me see.

Let's just start with Torah. If I said in my nice Accordance Bible software, I said, show me every occurrence of Torah in the books of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. That'd be a good start, right? Because that would be the place to start, and I did, and I found several references.

We're going to go through those. Open your Bible to Jeremiah chapter 2. Now, again, I'm just going to build a case here. These are the references to Torah in the book of Jeremiah.

So, what I want to know is, is there anything in here, because we know in the 18th year of Josiah's reign, which is the...Jeremiah has been a prophet for five years when Moses' scroll is discovered. You would think that he might bring that up. He might.

So, Jeremiah chapter 2, and the section goes from verse 4 to 29, but I just want you to look at verse 8. Jeremiah 2.8. The priest did not say, where is the Lord? And those who handle the law did not know me. Now, I'm giving you the English from the New American Standard. The rulers revolted against me, the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that were no benefit, or as kings did, of no profit.

(1:07:57 - 1:10:18)

R-O-F-I-T, profit, that kind of profit. So, he says here, the priest, so the priests aren't saying, where is the Lord? They're not interested in the Lord. The priest, what priest? Are we talking about priests in another country? Talking about the priests that are supposed to be looking for the Lord, right? That priest, not some other pagan group.

I'm talking about the priesthood. The priesthood is not concerned with God. And then where it says, those who handle the Torah, the ones who handle the Torah, literally this word, look up this word.

You do a search on this word. It's not like, like here, let's say, I don't have to play, or let's say I'm handling the Torah. It's not, the image, the text doesn't mean like as someone who's handling it gently.

This is like this. Those who grasp, seize the Torah. Somebody, this is what this word means, look it up.

There's not a word, this word, the root word here is not a word that means some gentle caressing of the Torah. He's saying those that have snatched the Torah, he's talking about the priest, they don't know me, all right? Now, by the way, where it says of no profit, Jeremiah is real keen on using this phrase. Uses it six times.

I like that word keen. I picked it up hanging around. No, no, that Jeremiah is keen on using the word no profit.

Profit shows up over and over. Now, go with me to Jeremiah 6. I'm going to go through these quickly. We're doing a survey of the word Torah in Jeremiah to see if there's anything in here.

Look at verse 16. By the way, I'm going to read one section set off by white spaces. Jeremiah 6.16. This is what the Lord says.

By the way, everybody loves this verse. I used it, Tabor's used it, people have used it. A lot of people don't know the context of it.

(1:10:19 - 1:10:33)

So, this is what the Lord says. Stand in the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths where the good way is and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls.

(1:10:34 - 1:11:31)

But they said, we will not walk in it. It's worse. And I set watchmen over you saying, listen to the sound of the trumpet.

But they said, we will not listen. Therefore, hear you nations. Look, can you, I'm sorry to interrupt myself.

Can you pull that curtain? Someone just parked there and that light is about to blind me. Pull it a little bit. Perfect.

Thank you very much. They said, we will not listen. Therefore, hear you nations and know you congregation what is among them.

Listen, earth. Behold, I'm bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they've not listened to my words. And as for my Torah, they have rejected it also.

(1:11:32 - 1:12:10)

For what purpose does frankincense come to me from Sheba and the sweet cane from a distant land? Your burn offerings are not acceptable and your sacrifices are not pleasing to me. Therefore, this is what the Lord said. Behold, I'm placing stumbling blocks before this people and they will stumble against them.

Father and sons together, neighbor and friend will perish. End of prophecy. Listen, from Jeremiah 6:16 until the end of 21 is one prophetic utterance.

(1:12:10 - 1:12:42)

One prophetic utterance. He says, they've not given attention to my word. Well, first he makes an offer.

Stand in the ways, see and ask for the ancient paths where the good way is. He's telling them, look, this is me paraphrasing, but you're going to see I'm right. He says, the way you're doing things now is been changed.

I want you to look at the ancient paths. There's a good way there and I want you to embrace that. He said, we're not interested.

(1:12:44 - 1:13:38)

He said, walk in this path. And they said, we're not, but you'll find rest for your souls. We're not going to do it.

And then he goes on to define further. They've not given attention to my words and they've rejected my Torah. They're following something, but it's not his Torah.

He says, literally, my Torah, they have rejected. And then it goes into a denouncement of sacrifices. So he just said, they've rejected my, here's the offer.

Take the ancient way, the good way on the ancient paths. Here's my Torah. They rejected it.

Walk in this, find rest for your soul. And then he says this strangely that he says that after they rejected his Torah, he says, your sacrifices will not be accepted. They're not pleasing.

(1:13:40 - 1:14:45)

And it's in the, you get, you get what I'm saying here. Very strange. Now the question becomes, and by the way, they refuse that.

The question becomes, could he mean that they rejected the Torah that was found in his days? You might be saying, no, it just means the Torah, Ross. It's the Torah that we all know. Don't, don't try to get creative.

Hang with me. Something is found in Jeremiah's days, God's Torah, the original Torah, the one that Moses wrote, it's found. And he says they rejected it.

Get it possibly, the one that was found, could it possibly have not contained sacrifices? Maybe. I know some of you want that system back, but maybe, let me prove it. Was there a more ancient way? Was Amos, for instance, in 525, in Amos chapter 5, verse 25, when he asked, did you offer sacrifices to me in the wilderness? The obvious answer is no.

(1:14:46 - 1:16:19)

So could it be that a scroll was found in the days of Josiah in the time of Jeremiah that didn't have sacrifices in it? He's trying to call them back to that way, and they said, we're not listening. We like the way we got it now. Okay, let's keep going.

Go to Jeremiah chapter 8. Let's see, Jeremiah chapter 8. We're going to read from verse 4. Remember, in the days of Jeremiah and in the days of Josiah, the real Torah scroll was found. Listen to verse 4, Jeremiah 8, 4. You shall say to them, this is what the Lord says. Do people fall and not get up? Does one turn away and not repent? Why has this people, Jerusalem, turned away in continual apostasy? They hold on to deceit.

Listen to that again. They hold on to deceit. They refuse to return.

I have listened and heard. They have spoken what is not right. No one repented of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? Everyone turned to his own course like a horse charging into the battle.

Even the stork in the sky knows their seasons, and the turtle dove, the swallow, and the crane keep to the time of their migration. But my people don't know the mishpat, the Lord. How can you say we are wise and the Torah of the Lord is with us? Behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie.

(1:16:21 - 1:17:50)

Wise men are put to shame. They're dismayed and caught. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord.

So what kind of wisdom do they have? End of prophetic section. That section goes from chapter 8 verse 4 to chapter 8 verse 9. And in that tight section, it says they've not repented. They're holding on to something which is deceptive.

They refuse to look at and accept the Torah. The one they're holding on to, it seems to say fairly clearly, though people really hate this because it goes against their fundamental views. What they're looking at is had something different.

This says very clearly the lying pen of the scribes tend to work here. But those, remember those who handle, that have taken hold of the Torah, what do they do? What do they do? It says they don't even know God. They've rejected the word of Jehovah.

But the scribes have really...are you suggesting, Ross, that the scribes changed the Torah? I'm saying Jeremiah is saying that. That's what he's...I didn't say it, I just read it. You read it.

(1:17:52 - 1:18:55)

Those who handle the law, let me ask you this, do you think, because we want to think, and we've been told to think, that Jeremiah, that the priesthood that Israel faithfully kept, you know, that, you know, you've heard it. Not what the Bible says. Not what the prophets say.

It's certainly not what God says. Our traditions have said, yeah, but they were good, you know. They kept it.

You think Jeremiah trusted the priesthood? He's a priest. He doesn't trust the priesthood. He says the priesthood is hopelessly corrupt.

He wants them to repent. They won't. You think the prophets thought that the priesthood was functioning right? If that's the case, why does Malachi bring a word of the Lord about dung from the sacrifices being smeared on the priest's faces? That's pretty rough.

(1:18:56 - 1:19:55)

Read that on your own. Malachi chapter 2 verse 3. You telling me that that's...that those priests in Malachi were doing the right thing? God says put the sacrificial dung on them? What about Zephaniah? Let me ask you that. He was a prophet at this time.

Maybe Zephaniah has something to say about people of his time, which is also the time of Jeremiah, the time of Josiah. Maybe he has something to say about people keeping the Torah the right way. You know, the Torah is found in his day.

Let's see what he says. Go to Zephaniah. Zephaniah chapter 3. Remember Zephaniah? You got to read Zephaniah in context.

Let's just look at verse 4. Chapter 3 verse 4. Her prophets are insolent, treacherous men. Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They've done violence to the law.

(1:19:57 - 1:20:48)

Wait a minute. The priests have profaned. Het lamed lamed.

To pollute the holy is what it says. And let me tell you what they did to the Torah. It says the priest, hamsu, hamsu Torah means they've done violence to it.

The priest, the ones who were supposed to be taking care of the holy things and distinguishing between the profane and the common and the holy and Malachi, right before he says smear the dung of the sacrifices on their faces, he says they've not done what they're supposed to do. They've polluted the holy and they've hamsu Torah. They've done violence to Torah.

(1:20:49 - 1:20:57)

Go to Ezekiel. Ezekiel, by the way, Ezekiel is from about the same time. Go to Ezekiel 22.

(1:20:58 - 1:21:58)

Remember we talked about Ezekiel at least having some overlap with this period. He's in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, Jeconiah's exile. Ezekiel 22 26.

Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They've made no distinction between the holy and the common and they've not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean. They've closed their eyes from my sabbaths and I am defiled among them.

Talking about the priesthood. You know what he says? He says exactly, it's switched, but it's the only two occurrences of this charge against the priesthood. It's at the same time in history.

It's at the time from Josiah's time until Jeconiah's fifth year of his exile. It's a tight window. You know what it says about the priesthood in that time? They've done two things the way the prophets describe it.

(1:21:58 - 1:22:06)

They have profaned the holy and hamsu Torah. Same phrase. Done violence to the Torah.

(1:22:07 - 1:23:46)

Something about the Torah that they did God calls violent. What does that mean? The question becomes, was the violence that the priesthood did to the Torah, was it before? Let's say they had a Torah that they had already corrupted and then a new Torah is found, 18th year of Josiah's reign, and then you compare the two and you go, they've changed things. Or did they find the Torah, the one that Moses really wrote, and then after, did they do things to it? Or both? Questions, questions, questions.

Okay, we're not done yet. Don't run off. Let's go to Jeremiah chapter 9. Jeremiah chapter 9 verse 12.

I think in English it might be verse 13. Yeah, verse 13 in English. The Lord said, behold, they have abandoned, or literally it means forsaken, they have abandoned or forsaken my Torah, which I put before them and have not obeyed my voice nor walked according to it, but followed the stubbornness of their heart and by all as their fathers taught them.

Therefore this is what the Lord of Armies, God of Israel, says. I'm going to feed this people wormwood, etc., etc. So here's the deal.

(1:23:47 - 1:24:43)

Jeremiah, here in Jeremiah's day, a scroll was found. You know what Jeremiah says? The one that God put before them. Now, I think it's interesting to note historically that in the time of Josiah and in the prophetic career of Jeremiah, literally the Torah was put before them.

And they said, we won't have anything. The priest said, we'll seize it. Was it literally set before them in the days of Josiah? By the way, this phrase is deuteronomic, let's say.

In other words, the put before you is something very interesting. It doesn't occur in Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers. The phrase only appears in the book of Deuteronomy.

(1:24:43 - 1:30:06)

I put before you, it's mentioned, I'm not going to go through these, but Deuteronomy 4, 8, Deuteronomy 11, 26, and 32, Deuteronomy 30, verse 1, 15, and 19. That phrase put before you, I put before you life and death, I put before you my Torah, I put before, that's a phrase that's only in Deuteronomy. What's interesting is that if you look at 2 Chronicles 34, 35, 2 Kings 23, 22, 23, that phrase and those phrases, everybody reads the account of the discovery of the scroll.

And without exception that I know of, most scholars all the way back to the 1800s have said the scroll that was discovered was a very similar to Deuteronomy, it was a form of Deuteronomy. This idea of putting before, you put the Torah before the people, it's not

found in any of the material in Deuteronomy from chapter 12 through 26, that's priestly. I'll get into that more later, but I want you to know it.

So think about that. The phrase is Deuteronomic, and whenever Jeremiah says God put a Torah in front of him, I think he means literally because it was found in their days. Now go to chapter 16, Jeremiah 16, Jeremiah 16, verse 9. Now look, there are people, by the way, that won't like this teaching because they've already, they're going to refuse to change because they're defending something that they've been told to defend.

It's the same thing that was happening in the days of Jeremiah, right? Listen to verse 9, Jeremiah 16, 9. For what is, this is what the Lord of armies, the God of Israel says. Behold, I'm going to eliminate from this place before your eyes and in your time the voice of rejoicing, the voice of joy, the voice of the groom, and the voice of the bride. It will happen that when you tell this people all these words, they'll say to you, for what reason has the Lord declared all this disaster against us? And what is our wrongdoing? Or what's our sin that we've committed against the Lord our God? Then you're going to say to them, it's because your forefathers have abandoned me, declares the Lord.

I followed other gods, served and worshipped them, but they have abandoned me and not kept my law or my Torah. You too have done evil, and even more than your fathers. For behold, every one of you is following the stubbornness of his own evil heart without listening to me.

So I'll hurl you off this land to the land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, and there you will serve other gods day and night, because I will show you no compassion. This idea, they have done the same thing as the fathers. He puts the Torah in front of them.

They continue to refuse. Look at Jeremiah 18, 18. 18, 18.

This is what the priesthood says. Then they said, come, let's devise plans against Jeremiah. Certainly the law is not going to be lost by the priest, nor advice by the wise, nor the divine word by the prophet.

Come, let's strike him with our tongue and let's pay no attention to any of his words. Let me tell you what's going on here. The priesthood says, listen up, let's discredit him.

We're going to strike him with our tongue. So you know what they do? They lash out against him and they speak bad against Jeremiah. That's what it means.

Let's strike him with our tongue and then we're going to ignore his words. You know what's really got them upset? He's making a clear statement. He's saying that this religious establishment that you've developed here, and we're going to get into this more in the coming weeks, he's saying this is, it's a lie.

It's not the original. He said, you priests, you've done violence to the Torah. He's saying, God says, I put my Torah before you and you rejected it.

And listen to what they say. He even says, Jeremiah says, the priests are the ones who've messed up the Torah. The priests have lost it.

Literally, avad means to cause it to perish, to come to ruin. So he said, you've spoiled it. You.

So what is their response? We're going to discredit Jeremiah. Here's Jeremiah. We're going to discredit him and we're going to ignore his words.

(1:30:07 - 1:31:07)

You know what he said? Why are they so mad again? Get this. The priest brought ruin to the Torah. The priest caused it to perish.

Go with me to Jeremiah 26. Jeremiah 26, verse one. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.

Look, we're a little bit later, right? The son of Josiah, king of Judah. This word came from the Lord saying, this is what the Lord says. Stand in the courtyard of the Lord's house, Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah who've come to worship in the Lord's house.

All the words that I've commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word. Perhaps they'll listen and everyone will turn from his evil ways.

(1:31:07 - 1:31:27)

And I will relent of the disaster, which I'm planning to inflict on them because of the evil of their deeds. I'll say to them, this is what the Lord says. If you will listen, if you do not listen to me, but walk in my Torah, which I have set before you.

(1:31:29 - 1:31:41)

Listen to the words of my servants, the prophets. I've been sending to you again and again, but you have not listened. I will make this house.

(1:31:43 - 1:33:07)

I will make this city a curse to all the nations. This is right after days of judgment. I'm sorry.

We'll get a little bit shaken by the true message of scripture. You've been thinking that everything is perfect in Judah during the days of Josiah. Josiah is not, he's just been put in the grave here.

It's the beginning of his son's reign. Now what God says is, Jeremiah, I want you to go to the temple, stand in the gate of the house. Don't you leave anything else.

Let's look, not going to be well received by the reporters. One thing about it, when a person is called by God to give the truth, it's not always accepted very well, particularly among the religious folks. They tell him you go and stand right there.

Now look, he doesn't say you go give them a pat on the back because they've lived so righteously under the days of Josiah. Says look, offer them another chance. I put my Torah before him and he did in 620.

(1:33:12 - 1:36:32)

Realized very soon corrupted violence had been this turn. But this sermon that he gives chapter 26 and also it's talked about in chapter 7 is not in the days of Josiah. I'm going to show you that it happens after.

I'm going to show you that 7 and 26 happen after the discovery of the scroll. We'll get into that. Jeremiah chapter 32 verse 23.

I'm just going to give you these next couple of passages and let you read him. Basically, it says there that they didn't obey your voice or walk in your Torah. Chapter 44 verses 7 through 10.

He talks about how he set before them and their fathers the Torah, and yet they didn't follow it. Now, I want you to go with me to Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah 31.

I want you to go to verse 31. The whole days are coming declares the Lord. I'm going to make a new covenant with the house of Israel in the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day.

I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant, which they broke, though I was a husband to them. But this is the covenant I'll make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I'll put my law within them and write it on their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

He says, I'm going to put my Torah in their midst, write it on their heart. Now, in the context of Jeremiah, realize that in his day, the Torah was literally put in their midst. They rejected it.

They were shown the real Torah. He didn't agree with what they had. Jeremiah tried to appeal to him.

He said, listen, the lying pen of the scribes is at work here. He even tells them what that lying pen wrote in there. Context is important.

If we want to understand the Torah that Moses wrote was lost and then found in the days of Josiah, also the days of Jeremiah, also the days of Zephaniah. It was put before the people, and the ancient paths were shown to them a good way that the people rejected, though, so it could give them comfort. The priest lost the Torah.

The priest did violence to it. The people rejected it, choosing their own way. What did Jeremiah do specifically? What did Jeremiah do when that scroll was found? Join me next Saturday.

I'll let him tell you.