

The Greatest Discovery - The Prophet Jeremiah: 9

(0:28 - 9:44)

Good morning, Shabbat Shalom and welcome to United Israel World Union. This is our Sabbath morning scripture study. Thank you very much for joining us today.

We are presently in an ongoing study that I've titled a study of the world and words of the Prophet Jeremiah. We're in class number nine. So again, thank you for being with us today.

We're talking about within the world and words of Jeremiah. We're focused on a particular time frame within a larger period of time. We're focusing in on the time of King Josiah.

Remember in Jeremiah chapter 1, we're introduced to the fact that Jeremiah is a prophet during several kings, the final kings of Judah, and so we're dealing with the fact that Jeremiah becomes a prophet first hears the word of the Lord in the 13th year of Josiah. As we look at Josiah's reign, we have several markers of time. We have the story of Josiah's reign in Kings and Chronicles, 2 Kings 22 and 23, and 2 Chronicles 34 and 35, and in that material we get just a few markers.

The first marker is he becomes king when he's eight years old upon the assassination of his father Ammon, and in Chronicles we read that at eight years into this, in the eighth year of his reign, he begins to seek the God of his father David. We also get in Chronicles one other small marker that says in the twelfth year, Josiah begins a purge of Judah and Jerusalem, so he really begins to incorporate some of his godly behavior that the writers know so well. And then we go to the 18th year of his reign.

Now if we open up Kings, 2 Kings 22, we get that the eight-year-old Josiah becomes king, and then the next thing we read in Kings is in the 18th year of his reign, or the 18th year of Josiah's reign. But we don't get any of the middle ground, but we do get that in Chronicles. So let's go with those two points, and then the final marker that's covered in the reign of Josiah is his death.

So basically the biggest part of what we know about Josiah's reign, at least as far as Kings and Chronicles goes, the writers are focused on the 18th year of his reign, and it's in that 18th year that the most incredible things take place. That's what we're going to focus on today. So the 18th year of Josiah's reign puts us in 622 BCE.

622 BCE is the 18th year of his reign. And it's in this 18th year, remember if we read Chronicles, we know that he's already for several years sought after the God of his father David, he's also begun to do this purge, and then in the 18th year we read in both Kings and Chronicles that King Josiah calls to him a man by the name of Shephon, Shephon HaSophar. Now Shephon HaSophar, Shephon is the scribe, Sophar means scribe, it's sometimes referred to as the secretary, sometimes the translation is rendered the secretary.

I'm checking out something on my feed, second. So you have Shephon HaSophar, he calls the scribe to him and he dispatches Shephon, assigns him a major project, and the major project is this, he's going to repair the house of the Lord. And Shephon is told you're going to go, this is Josiah to Shephon, you're going to go and get with, team up with Hilkiah, the high priest, Hilkiah as we read in English, the high priest, for this great work of reparation

and restoration of the house of the Lord, which according to Chronicles, the kings of Judah have let go to ruin.

Now I just want to make a remark that if you read the account in Josephus, Josephus covers the stories quite often parallel with the biblical accounts, but just so you have it in your notes, in the biblical accounts in both Kings and Chronicles, what we get is that the high priest's name is Hilkiah. If you read Josephus, it's Eliakim. Now as many of you know from reading even the biblical accounts, there are often more names than one for particular people, but the high priest at the time, Shephon is to get with him and they're going to carry this work out together.

Now here is where I want to begin our story today. Last week we talked about, we focused in on this idea that the kings of Judah have let the house go to ruin. So we worked through some of the different kings and how various kings had let various parts of the house go to ruin, plenty of bad kings, but even good kings at time would take things from the house and give it away in order to secure peace with an attacking enemy, etc.

But now I want to focus on this restoration that's ongoing, because it's during this restoration that I would say arguably the greatest discovery of all time took place. Go with me this morning to 2nd Chronicles. 2nd Chronicles and I want to go to chapter 34 and verse 14.

34 verse 14 of 2nd Chronicles. And when they were bringing out the money which had been brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. Now I want to focus in on the Hebrew words here.

It says, I have found at Sefer Torah Jehovah be Yad Moshi. What the writer is telling us is that Hilkiah, during this restoration, he brings out of the house something that he has found and it is clearly described as a Sefer, which a lot of times is translated scroll, but technically the word for scroll is Megillah, it means a roll. But this says it's a Sefer, and that's all we know.

It's a Sefer, which is a word that can mean an account, a written record, generally a written record. So what's it written on? We don't get that information, we don't get a lot of details, we just we know that it is an account. What's it an account of? The Torah Jehovah, the instruction of God basically, the instruction of God.

But then there's a phrase be Yad Moshi, which means in the hand of Moses. So what he's claiming, what the writer of Chronicles 34, 2nd Chronicles 34 is saying, is that what Hilkiah finds is an account of the instruction of God that Moses wrote, right? It's not a copy, it's not something that was picked up at the local bookstore in Jerusalem, it's actually the work that can be traced back to Moses. Now I'm going to continue in verse 15, Hilkiah responded and said to Shefan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord and Hilkiah gave the book to Shefan.

(9:45 - 28:52)

Sefer HaTorah Matzati, I have found the instruction account. He's giving this now in his possession, he hands it to Shefan. Now by the way, both the account in Kings and Chronicles match in every detail.

So this story is consistent if you're reading 2nd Chronicles 34 15, or if you flip over to the reading in 2nd Kings chapter 22 verse 8, you get this report from Hilkiah to Shefan, Sefer HaTorah Matzati, I have found, basically I've found the Torah, capital T, capital H, capital E, and he gives it to Shefan. Now the interesting thing is that Kings adds a detail that Chronicles doesn't have. In 2nd Kings chapter 22 verse 8, it says after Hilkiah hands the scroll, Sefer HaTorah, to Shefan, Kings tells us this, and he read it, and he read it.

So he gets the scroll from Hilkiah and he reads it. Now the way that this is worded is that he read it. There is a way, and you'll see in a moment, there's a way to say if you read parts of something.

It doesn't say he read from it, it doesn't say he read in it, it says he read it. Now this indicates, now we don't know how long it took him, but you get the impression from the story that it's handed to him, and he reads it right there on the spot. Now the question is, what is he reading? What's handed to him? What is contained within this Sefer? How big is it? How many chapters? How many books? Does he read an entire library of books? Does he read from Genesis 1 through Deuteronomy 34 12, which is generally the way that people tend to think about what he read.

But he says he read it. Now both accounts then tell us that Shefan, who now has received the Sefer from Hilkiah, and he's read it, says next he brings it to Josiah. Now Kings and Chronicles are word-for-word on this idea.

The Chronicler just simply says that when he goes to see Josiah, it says, and he brought with him the scroll. Kings doesn't tell us that, but it's obvious he's got the scroll with him if we study the context of 2nd Kings chapter 22. He gets the scroll, he reads it, he brings it to Josiah.

Now the story in Kings and Chronicles, again, matches. From this point what we get is Shefan walks in and it says that he begins to update Josiah on the work. Now remember it's Shefan we already talked about that was dispatched to sort of superintend, not sort of, to superintend with the assistance of Hilkiah the reparation and the restoration of God's house which the kings of Judah have let go to ruin.

So he's updating him on that. Both accounts have this story. And then it says, now this is something interesting, it's like he tells the story, you know, yeah we did this and we were working, etc.

And then he says in Hebrew, Sefer Natanli Hilkiahu. Sefer Natanli means Hilkiah gave a scroll to me. Sefer Natanli Hilkiahu.

Hilkiah gave me this scroll. And then he begins to do something interesting. Now Kings is consistent.

Kings says, and he read it. Again, not read from it, not read part of it, not like just flipped and hit a couple of high points, says he reads it to the king. Now again, I'm telling you the way that the direction of the text is leading my thinking here.

It says that he read it to the king. So that means by this point he's read it twice. He read the scroll, the Sefer, when it was given to him by Hilkiah.

He now is standing before the king and he reads it again. Now interestingly enough, full disclosure, Chronicles didn't have at the beginning that Shaphan read it, and here where Shaphan tells us in Kings that he read it to the king, Chronicles says he read in it, okay? All right, now let me let me take just a moment on this to make this really crystal clear. According to Kings, Shaphan gets it from Hilkiah, he reads it twice.

Once when he first gets it, once when he's standing before Josiah. Chronicles says Shaphan receives it from Hilkiah, he goes before the king and he reads in it. Now the difference in Hebrew is very slight.

In Kings it says, Vayikraahu, Vayikraahu, and he read it. He read it, he read the scroll. Chronicles says Vayikraaboh, Vayikraaboh.

Vayikraaboh means and he read in it. It doesn't necessarily say that he didn't read all of it, but it does give you the option to say that he didn't read the whole scroll. Now I can imagine if you're going before a king, you know, I could imagine that the king might be waiting, you know, and you're reading, and you're reading, and you're reading.

The question again is, what is he reading? Is he reading the Torah, Sefer Torah, beyond Moshe? Does that mean he's reading to him, okay king, listen, I found this scroll. Bereshi, berai Elohim, et ha'shemayim, ve'et ha'arets, ve'ha'arets, ha'etah tohu ve'vohu, ve'chorshik ha'apanet. Is he reading beginning in Genesis 1? That's not the impression that we get, and you'll see that.

Now, a couple of points about this discovery that are very important to make at this juncture. The language is very clear, and what I mean by this is the language is clear at least according to our sources. If we read 2 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 34, what is described as being found is not a copy of the scroll that Moses wrote, it is the scroll that Moses wrote.

It is the very scroll, Sefer Torah beyond Moshe, it is the very scroll that Moses wrote by the direction of God for the children of Israel. Now take a pause. This has become the focus of everything that I've worked on, as many of you know, for the past few years.

What was in that scroll? What was in that Sefer? What did it say? And think about this. Could it really be that the scroll which was found by Hilkiah goes back to the very hand of Moses, back to the time of Moses? Could it be the original? That's what Kings and Chronicles tells us, is that it is the original. Now I want you to think about that for a moment.

This Sefer, again we don't know was it written on papyrus, was it written on leather, was it, you don't get any of those details. Nothing like that is preserved in the accounts. But we do get clues.

But this would have been, and this depends on when you date the Exodus, depending on when you date the Exodus is, you know, the timing, you know, how old is the scroll at the time. But let's say it's going to be approximately 800 years old. Now that's not unrealistic at

all, because if you think back to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the winter of 1947, these scrolls we've now confirmed date back more than or approximately 2,000 years.

So more than twice the age of the scroll discovery that's described here. And those were discovered in caves and, you know, buried under animal droppings and etc. Some of those scrolls are in really good shape though, many of you know this.

You can pick them up and read them today, the ink looks like it was just put on. So I think that in an environment where it's protected, it would have been in good shape. They found this scroll approximately 800 years old.

Now I want to really focus in on this, and the reason that it's so important to focus in on this discovery, what was, where was it found, where would you expect to find it? If you go into the temple, let's say somebody said, I want you to go get that scroll. You say, okay, where am I gonna go? Am I gonna go look around by the menorah? Am I gonna go look around the showbread? Well, I know where it's supposed to be, so where would I go? Get this. Let's go back to the book of Deuteronomy, and I want to pick it up in Deuteronomy chapter 31.

Deuteronomy chapter 31. We're going to talk about what is claimed to be the discovered sefer. What is it that they found? Well, this is what they found, according to the writer of Kings and Chronicles.

Now, if you don't believe Kings and Chronicles, you think whatever you want, but if you believe in Kings and Chronicles, they say it's the one that Moses wrote. There might be another one, but I'm talking about the one he wrote. So here we go, Deuteronomy 31:9, it says, ויתוב משה את התורה הזאת, and Moses wrote this Torah, right? It says, and he gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, the ones who bear the Aaron Barith Yehovah, those who carry the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah, and to all the Zechnei Yisrael, and to all the elders of Israel.

So it says Moses wrote this Torah, and after he writes it, he gives it to a group that it's called in Hebrew HaKonim. He gives it to HaKonim, the sons of Levi, the Nei Levi, specifically the ones who carry the Ark. Now, this is a specific group.

I've taught on this in the past, not just any Levite. It's not like he just says, hey, know that we have several branches, families of Levites. I'm just gonna put this here and you all are responsible for it.

No, it's very specific. It's the ones who carry the Ark. Now, who is that? Again, we've covered that in another class.

It's not the focus today, but I want to point out a couple of things to make sure, to underscore, that you get this. This account that I just read is in the third person, meaning someone is telling me that Moses wrote a book. What I'm reading from does not necessarily have to be that book, but the book that I am reading from, please understand me, the book that I am reading from tells me that Moses wrote a book.

Okay? A Sefer, is what it's called. Now, I want you to scroll down to verse 24. 31-24.

And it says, and it came about when Moses finished writing, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the law and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, so that it may remain there as a witness against you. So I want you to really catch this. You have to pay attention.

We're going according to the text. What does the text say? The text says, in this book that I'm reading from, we now call Deuteronomy, in the book of Deuteronomy, the book of Deuteronomy, the writer thereof, is telling us in the third person that Moses wrote the Torah, HaTorah HaZot, he finished writing all the words of HaTorah HaZot on a Sefer, Al Sefer, Ad Tumam, until they were complete. So the writer of this book is telling us about another book.

Not telling us about this book. He's telling us about another book. And guess what? This book, I'm saying book, this Sefer, is one that Moses wrote.

And Moses, by the way, completed writing this book. And we're told about it in Deuteronomy chapter 31. It says he completes it to the very end, Ve'etzav.

Ve'etzav Moshe et HaLevi'im. And Moses commanded the Levites, the ones bearing the Ark. Again, not, hey all you Levites.

No, he's talking to a very specific group. You, not you, not you, not all y'all are Levites, I get it. I'm talking about you, the ones who bear the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah.

I want you to take, I'choak et Sefer HaTorah HaZeh. Take this Torah, this Sefer Torah, and I want you to put it mitzahed, mitzahed the Ark. Now what does mitzahed mean? So here's what we need to look at.

Because remember, it's this book that Deuteronomy is telling us about. The little book that Moses wrote and wrote until the very end and entrusted to the Levites, the writer of Deuteronomy is telling me about this book. Not telling me about Deuteronomy, he's telling me about a book that Deuteronomy tells me about.

So what he says is, he says that he wants them to take the book that he wrote, whoever's writing this is telling us about Moses's book, and he's reporting that Moses charged the Levites that carry the chest or the Ark of the Covenant. Put this Sefer mitzahed, mitzahed Aaron. Now, Aaron is translated Ark, but it means a chest or a box, a chest or a box.

So whatever you think about, you know, we say Ark, but that's become sort of built into our theological parochial description. It's a box, it's a chest, an Aaron. In fact, over and over, particularly Deuteronomy's author tells us that this is the Aaron Brit, the box of the covenant or the covenant chest.

So he says put this Sefer that I've written, and I'm finished with it by the way, right? You still have three chapters left in Deuteronomy, I'm not talking about Deuteronomy, I'm talking about this right here. Look, here it is. I'm gonna fold it or roll it, however, and I'm gonna say here, take this, the book that Moses wrote, and put it mitzahed.

Now what does that mean? Mitzahed in Hebrew is best translated as beside, next to. In fact, if you think about the English word side, and you listen to the Hebrew, mitzahed, side, mean side. So what it's saying is, you will put this what is beside the Aaron, put it beside the chest.

(28:52 - 42:40)

Now, it's not inside, not inside the box, it's beside it, okay? Now if it were inside the box, maybe that would be a safer place to put it, but we don't get that, that's not what it says to do. In fact, we're told very clearly what is inside the chest, not the Sefer Torah beyond Moshe, that's beside it. What's inside it is reserved for what someone else wrote, okay? So we want to get distinct, we want to understand here that we have two, the most sacred items according to the Bible.

Beyond anything else, you have two stone tablets according to accounts in the Pentateuch, written with the finger of God on both sides, you know these texts. Inside the box, in fact, that's what the box is for, you have what God wrote. Moses' writing is number two on the list of most important things ever written.

It's going to be mitzahed. You don't put it in the box with that which God wrote. In fact, go with me to Deuteronomy 10, Deuteronomy 10, and we're going to begin in verse 1. Deuteronomy 10, verse 1. But at that time, the Lord said to me, cut out for yourself two tablets of stone like the first two, and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood for yourself.

Make an ark of wood for yourself. And then I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you smashed to pieces, and you shall put them in the ark. So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut out two tablets of stone like the first two, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hand.

Then he wrote on the tablets like the first writing the ten commandments which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of fire on the day of assembly, and the Lord gave them to me. Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the tablets in the ark which I had made, and there they are as the Lord commanded me." A couple of points about this. This is a first-person account.

We have another account of the second set of tablets from Exodus 34 which does not agree in every detail with what we read in Deuteronomy chapter 10. That is very clear and indisputable. We've talked about that in other classes, but if you choose to, I encourage you to go look at those accounts side-by-side.

Deuteronomy 10 and Exodus chapter 34. Feel free to do that so that you can compare those and see if they agree in every detail and they don't. But Deuteronomy chapter 10 is interesting because it's a first-person account.

Exodus 34 is not. This is very, very important to get. Deuteronomy chapter 10 is first-person, and in the first-person account, presumably Moses tells us that he is instructed by God to make a box, to make the Aaron, and he says he did.

He says that the tablets are placed in the box that he made. Now elsewhere in the Pentateuch, we get a story about Bezalel and Aholiiov making the Aaron, and it has these

angelic beings, if you will, maybe not safe to call them, but cherubim, cherubim on the box, etc. But we won't get into that at this present point.

So what I want you to understand is there's a box, according to Deuteronomy, that Moses makes, and the box is designed to hold within it the two tablets that God wrote on. Moses makes the box, puts in the box that Moses made, that he made, the two tablets of stone that God wrote on with his finger. Now just to make sure you get this, that's it.

Nothing else goes in the box. I know that rabbinic tradition says that the broken pieces from the previous tablets that were smashed go in there. Christianity and the book of Hebrews puts all kind of stuff in there.

It puts the golden urn of manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets. So it's got, you know, the box is jammed full. But according to the biblical account, Moses makes a little box.

He puts within that box the two stone tablets. In fact, go with me, let me give you these for your notes. You probably know these, but 1st Kings chapter 8 and verse 9. There was nothing in the box except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt.

That's it. And it's very clear. There's a way in Hebrew that you say that this is all that's in there, and I just read it.

There's nothing in there except the two stone tablets. Look with me for one other reference. 1st Chronicles, I'm sorry, 2nd Chronicles chapter 5 and verse 10.

In case the 1st Kings 8 wasn't enough, 2nd Chronicles 5 10 says, there was nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel when they came out of Egypt. So again, religious traditions that want to put all sorts of things in there don't have the support of the Hebrew Bible. They lean on traditions, okay? So I'm gonna go with Kings and Chronicles here and think that's pretty clear.

Now, so inside, not alone, inside is nothing but two tablets of the covenant. On the outside, beside the box, is the Sefer Torah from Moses's hand. So the Sefer HaTorah beyond Moshe was completed.

It was entrusted to the Levites who carried the ark, the specific group, who were then charged. They and the elders were charged. Here is the scroll of the Torah, somebody is telling it, the writer of Deuteronomy telling us that Moses finished writing, gave it to him, and Moses told them, according to the writer of Deuteronomy, put these beside the ark.

Now, when Hilkiah discovers the Sefer Torah beyond Moshe, the ark isn't there. Like, if you went in, you're like, oh, I tell you what, now that we've got this reparation and this restoration going on, I've been needing to do a spring cleaning, and by the way, it was spring, because we know that the Passover follows, etc. He goes in, he's like, I'm gonna go look.

You would think he would say, hey, wait a minute, the ark isn't here. There's no mention. Now, some of you might be saying, yeah, Ross, but we know it's there.

No, we actually know that it's not there, and that's what we're gonna prove right now. We're gonna work through this, because it's very important. The single greatest event that takes place in this world and words of Jeremiah the prophet, particularly within the reign of Josiah, is this great discovery.

So it's like we're looking. The world time frame is closed in. We've gone from eternity past to eternity future, and we're focused in on 622 BCE, the 18th year of Josiah's reign.

A particular day, Hilkiah, the high priest, goes into this place. The ark's not there. Not there.

It's not that it wasn't mentioned. We're gonna see it wasn't there. Now, we know at one point, according to the writers of the Bible, it was there.

Go back with me to 1 Kings chapter 8. Let's show you that it was there. We know it was there, according to the writers. 1 Kings 8, and we're gonna go to verse 6. By Yadvil HaKoanim, and the priest brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place into the inner sanctuary of the house to the most holy place under the wings of the cherubim.

For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim made a covering over the ark and its carrying poles from above. But the poles were so long that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen outside. They are there to this day.

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt. Now, a couple of points. By the way, this is also in 2 Chronicles chapter 5. A couple of points to make.

This text has a ring of antiquity because of a statement that I read just now where it says you can still see it to this day. In other words, the poles are sticking out. Now, if someone is writing at a period when this is no longer the case, they wouldn't have put that part in there.

You understand what I'm saying? In other words, it is a signifier that this is an ancient text. Some of the early biblical scholars notice this, and I think it's a great point. In other words, if you're writing something later and you want to anachronistically tell us something, you're not going to say, and you can still see it today, because that could be verified.

Somebody could say, well, I went, you couldn't, you know. So this is interesting. Now, this is in Solomon's time, and if you know where we're at in the Bible in 1 Kings chapter 8, we're actually at that point in the narrative where Solomon is about to dedicate the house of the Lord.

So this is at the very beginning. The house is completed, and he has the priest bring the the Ark of the Covenant, in our language, and put it in its place. There's a place designed for it.

Now, the question is, if some of you think it remained there, then we're gonna see if that holds up according to the biblical account. It's interesting that it's not mentioned again. Now, I know some of you are going for the keyboard.

It's not mentioned again until, directly, underlined, until the days of Josiah and Jeremiah, which I'll get to in a moment. Now, there is a passage, go with me to Isaiah chapter 37, Isaiah 37 beginning in verse 14, and by the way, this is also found in 2 Kings 19, verse 14 through 19. Isaiah is contemporary with Hezekiah, so this is Isaiah's version.

It's also repeated in 2 Kings 19. Isaiah 37, 14, Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. He went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.

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Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, saying, Lord of armies, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, you made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, Lord, and hear. Open your eyes, Lord, and see, and listen to all the words of Sennacherib who sent them to taunt the living God.

Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries and their lands, and it goes on. Now, some might say that Hezekiah being at the temple is making reference to the Ark of the Covenant because of the phrase, you who sit upon the cherubim, right? Now, but it doesn't say that specifically, but I just wanted to come forward with that and say this is sometimes thought to be a suggestion that up until the time of Hezekiah, the Ark remained in the house of the Lord. Now again, but it doesn't specifically say that, but I'll give you that if you want to say that's a clear reference.

Now, what we know is that Jeremiah and Josiah mentioned the Ark in 622 roughly BCE. So in the 7th century BCE, a hundred years after Hezekiah, they do mention the Ark, but it's strangely mentioned suggesting that it wasn't in the house. Now, how do I know that? We know, first of all, go with me to Jeremiah chapter 3, and let's just go to verse 6, and this is going to show that it's in the days of Josiah.

Then the Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah. Anybody agree that it's the days of King Josiah? Jeremiah is speaking first person here. The Lord spoke to him in the days of King Josiah.

If you read chapter 3 from this point forward, it's a single prophetic utterance that rolls down, it rolls down, there's no change, there's nothing that now interrupts and says now in the days of King Jehoiakim or anything. Now, go down to verse 16, chapter 3, verse 16, Jeremiah, and it shall be in those days. Vahayahi, and it will be that when you become numerous and are fruitful in the land, declares the Lord, they will no longer say the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor miss it, nor will it be made again.

Now, what that tells me is that at this time those things are happening. In other words, he says days are coming when, right, when they're not going to say the Ark of the Covenant, they're not even going to talk about it, which as I pointed out before, that makes reading some texts from the Pentateuch very difficult. You can imagine being in a synagogue in the

Olam Ha-Ba and somebody says, now we're going to talk about the Ark of the Covenant, and everyone should go, what? Because it says it's going to come about, but anyway, you get it.

It's not going to come to mind, they're not going to remember it, they're not going to miss it, and there's not going to be another one. So according to Jeremiah, it's almost an argument from silence, but it's more than that, because he's giving key things which are being said and thought and remembered, suggesting that at that time it is missed, it is coming to mind, there are people maybe even talking about making another. Where is it? Okay, 18th year of Josiah's reign, Jehoiakiah goes in, he discovers the scroll, he tells Shaphan about it, and you say, well maybe he just didn't mention that the Ark was in.

Well, let's look. I want you to read with me 2 Chronicles 35 verse 3. Now let me give you the context here. This is after the discovery, after the house has been repaired, there's a description of a great celebration and the festival and so forth, but listen to verse 3. This is Josiah, 2 Chronicles 35 verse 3. He also said to the Levites, this is English, who taught all Israel and who were holy to the Lord, put the holy Ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built.

It will not be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and his people Israel. Take the Ark.

Now first of all, he's talking to a specific group of Levites. He says the the Levites who understood, in Hebrew it's the understanding ones, the ones who were holy to the Lord, implying that maybe not all were, and if you read the Bible you'll see that that is the case more often than not. He's talking to a group of understanding Levites, and particularly, who would they be? They're the ones who carry it on their shoulder.

Now we already learned that there was a certain group that were entrusted with this box in the beginning, and with the scroll, interestingly enough. But here it says that you Levites, the understanding ones, the ones that are holy to the Lord, I want you to put that chest of the covenant in the house that Solomon built. Get this, you don't have to carry it on your shoulders anymore.

Anymore? I thought in first Kings 8 they put it in the temple. Why would they be? Well, they did. This is the theory.

If you read the text, clearly it was placed in there, no longer borne on their shoulders, but at some point, at some point, it must have then been pulled out. Perhaps these understanding ones were fearful that one of these kings of Judah, who let the place go to ruin, would somehow let this go to ruin as well. We've read some bad stories last week about the goings-on in the house of the Lord at the direction, or by the permission, or by the omission, or not stopping it, the kings of Israel or Judah throughout this time.

So this command of the king to put the ark in the temple comes after the discovery of the scroll that was written by Moses, so it wasn't in the house at the time of the discovery. Now, if the scroll was discovered in the days of Josiah, and it was not beside the ark as we know it should have been, then at some point in the history the two became separated. Obviously.

The ark isn't in there, the scroll that Moses wrote is found in there, and there are all sorts of interesting rabbinic legends as to where exactly it was discovered, was it behind a pile of rocks, was it hidden? The point is, the ark's not there, the scroll was found. Now, you know how at football games people have a banner that says John 3 16 or whatever? If any of you ever go to a football game, do this for me and tell me you're gonna do it and what time and I'm gonna watch for you. Put Jeremiah 3 16, because Jeremiah 3 16 is the passage where Jeremiah says that there's coming a time when no one's gonna miss this box, another one's not gonna be made, you won't even remember it.

Now, this tells me that...now remember, Jeremiah 3 is in the days of Josiah, so 3 16 must be written either before the ark is put back in there, or after the ark had been placed in there and then maybe pulled back out, but it seems to occur during the days of Josiah. So it's either written in the days of Josiah before the ark is put in, and I'm sorry to be vague but I want to give you both options, or the ark in the days of Josiah is put back in the 18th year of his reign according to 2nd Chronicles 35 3, and then at some point between the 18th year of his reign and his death in the 31st year, it's pulled back out and then Jeremiah is saying, look, I know you guys are talking about the ark that's missing, but look, there's coming a day when you won't even think about it, you won't remember it, it's not gonna come to mind, you won't miss it, another one won't be built. See the two options? Those are the two options.

But it has to fall in a 19-year window, it comes up missing. Now how do I know that? Well, by the way, perhaps the same loyal Levites who had pulled it out before are commissioned or charged to, hey you Levites, the ones I trust, the ones who are holy to the Lord, the ones who bear the ark on your shoulder, that's probably what happens, right? Now we know this, we know that it's pulled out again because when the temple is ransacked, all of this is important for the world in words of Jeremiah the prophet, these days of the prophet Jeremiah, because Jeremiah will see it through to the destruction, to the sacking of the temple. Now if you read about the sacking of the house of the Lord in 2nd Kings chapter 25 or Jeremiah chapter 52, there is a record of what is taken as booty by the pillagers, and the ark is not mentioned.

Now that would be mentioned if it was there, right? But it's not there. In fact, it's not mentioned again after 2nd Chronicles chapter 35 and verse 3. Some propose that King Josiah hid it. Rabbinic tradition, this is what the rabbis say, is that they have legends, they have stories that Josiah hid the ark, and that could work because we know that he knows that it's there, 2nd Chronicles 35 3, we know that he dies and then later the temple is sacked, and when it's sacked, it's not mentioned.

So it could happen in Josiah's days, maybe Josiah has something to do with its disappearance, I don't know. But another theory is that Jeremiah hid it. In fact, we get the story in 2nd Maccabees.

I write about this in my book and you can get it in 2nd Maccabees where it talks about that Jeremiah took the ark and the tent and so forth and took them into Transjordan. But at any rate, it's not mentioned again in the historical narratives after Josiah puts it back in. Now the question I have, what about the scroll? What about the scroll? In other words, if the ark

mysteriously showed up and then disappeared in the days of Josiah, in the days of Jeremiah, and the scroll mysteriously showed up and then disappeared, can I say that? I think.

Where is it? In a text with no indicator of when it happens, in other words, there's no king mentioned, it doesn't say in the days of Josiah, it doesn't say in the days of Isaiah or Zedekiah, we don't get that. But in Jeremiah, I'm going to take you to a text where I'm going to suggest to you that Jeremiah is speaking about the discovered scroll. Now, we know that the ark mysteriously appears and then somehow disappears in the days of Josiah, most likely, or at least during the time of Jeremiah, and Jeremiah mentions the ark.

So the question becomes, does he mention the scroll that was discovered? I mean, that would be a big deal, because remember, they're supposed to be together, the ark and the scroll. Jeremiah says, yep, the ark. Now let me tell you about the ark, it's not going to be missed.

But what does he say about the scroll? Because he is, when the scroll is discovered, he's been a prophet for five years. How do I know that? Because his prophecy career begins the 13th year of Josiah, the scroll is discovered in the 18th year, as simple math, he's been a prophet, well, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, it always gets me, in the sixth year, right? The 18th, somewhere in that period of time, he's been a prophet five, six years, the scroll is discovered. So I want you to go with me, it would be interesting if Jeremiah mentioned a scroll that was discovered.

This is as close as I can find in Jeremiah, you be the judge. Jeremiah chapter 3, I'm sorry, Jeremiah chapter 15 and verse 16. He says, *Nimtzu devarecha baokalem*, your words they were found and I ate them.

(58:33 - 1:02:30)

Your words they were found and I ate them. Now, some might say, some might be inclined to say, well, you're saying that, but it might not refer to the actual discovery of a scroll, but it might just mean, you know, more in a, not in a literal sense, but more in a general sense, that the scroll, it doesn't mean that, yeah, they found the scroll in his days and you ate it figuratively, maybe it just means I ate your words. And we do have an example of something like that idea in Ezekiel chapter 3, we'll talk about that in just a minute.

But the point that I want to make is, the scroll is discovered in Josiah's day, and it's called the *Sefer Torah Yehovah b'Yad Moshe*. In other words, this is the Word of God through Moses, and so I believe that he is saying here, your words were found. Now notice this *Nimtza'u*, *Nimtza'u* is the same word that we found the scroll.

Matzati, matzati, I found your scroll, *Nimtza'u*, when they were found, your words, I ate them, meaning figuratively I consumed this scroll, figuratively. Now we get this in other texts as well, remember in Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 9, when Jeremiah is called, now this is before the discovery of the scroll, at least five or six years before, we get this account where God says, it reaches out his hand and he says, I therefore put my words in your mouth. You do get that.

Go with me to Ezekiel chapter 2. Ezekiel 2, let me give you this one. Ezekiel chapter 2 verse 1, remember this is after the events, very close in time though by the way, very close in

time. Ezekiel does overlap with this period that we're talking about, particularly Jeremiah's prophecy.

Alright, so Ezekiel 2, 1, Then he said to me, Son of man, first person, stand on your feet and I will speak with you. And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet. How many of you ever heard that in that Old Testament stuff, the Spirit came on but not in? The Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet.

I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Son of man, I'm sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who've rebelled against me. They and their fathers have revolted against me to this very day.

So I'm sending you to those who are impudent and obstinate children and you shall say to them, this is what the Lord God says. As for them, whether they will listen or not, for they are a rebellious house, they will know that a prophet has been among them. And as for you, Son of man, you are not to fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns, I love that, are with you and you sit on scorpions, you are not to fear their words, nor be dismayed at their presence, since they're a rebellious house.

But you shall speak my words to them, whether they listen or not, for they're rebellious. Now you, Son of man, listen to what I'm speaking to you. Don't be rebellious like the rebellious house.

Open your mouth wide and eat what I'm giving you. I always, when I read that, every time I read that, I think about it because I have six kids and all these grandkids, you know, you like your feed. Open your mouth, open your mouth, open your mouth, eat what I'm gonna give you.

(1:02:30 - 1:12:54)

Verse 9, I looked and behold a hand was extended to me and behold a scroll was in it. Now here the word is Megillah, a scroll was in it. When he spread it out before me, it was written on the front and the back, and written on it were songs of mourning, sighing, and woe.

This is not the same scroll of Jeremiah's day, but it's a scroll, a Megillah. Verse 1, he said to me, Son of man, eat what you find, eat this scroll and go speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, he fed me this scroll, and he said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach, fill your body with this scroll which I'm giving you.

I ate it, it was sweet as honey in the mouth. Then he said, Son of man, go to the house of Israel, speak with my words to them. In other words, the scroll contained the words of God.

For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but to the house of Israel, nor to many people of unintelligible speech or difficult language whose words you can't understand, but I've sent you to the people you who understand you, yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, etc. And then he tells him he strengthened them, and so forth, and ultimately he does go. Now, here in Ezekiel 2, 1 through 3, 11, we do get this idea that God's words are represented by a vision, at least, of a scroll.

How literally are we to take this? I don't know, but the idea is that when God gives a scroll, the words then become part of that prophet, then the prophet speaks. So I think this could be figurative as well, as far as the eating. I don't think that Ezekiel actually physically ate, you know, ripping off pieces of papyrus or leather.

I think that this is the idea here, but he's going to take the message that he consumes. So when I read from Jeremiah, your words were found and I ate them, I think it is interesting, to say the least, that it's in the days of Jeremiah that a scroll was found containing God's words by the hand of Moses. And then Jeremiah consumes these words and goes forth.

Now, I'm of the opinion that there's a high likelihood that Jeremiah is very much in the know, particularly if some of the idea that if, let's say, Hilkiyah, the discoverer of the scroll is the same Hilkiyah as Jeremiah's father. Could be? We don't know. Honestly, we don't know, but it's very interesting.

Could be another Hilkiyah. But the Hilkiyah who finds the scroll is a priest. The high priest at the time, at least according to biblical account, is Hilkiyah.

Now, Jeremiah says that he ate these words. Now look at verse 16 of Jeremiah 15. I want to go back to Jeremiah 15.

Jeremiah 15, and we want to begin now in verse 16. Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became a joy to me in the delight of my heart. For I'm called by your name, Lord God of armies.

I did not sit in a circle of revelers and celebrate. Because of your hand upon me, I sat alone. You filled me with indignation.

Why is my pain been endless and my wound incurable? Refusing to be healed. Will you indeed be to me like a deceptive spring with water that is unreliable? In other words, he's saying, I went to you, God, for a drink, a refreshing drink of water, and he's basically, not basically, he's saying that God has failed to sustain him with this water. That's his charge.

Watch what God says to him. Verse 19. Therefore this is what the Lord says, if you return and I will restore you.

Actually, the Hebrew is you return to me, I'll return to you. Like it says in Zechariah and Malachi and other passages, this is always the way it works. You come to me, I come to you.

He says, if you return, then I'll return you. You will stand before me, and if you, the English says, if you extract the precious from the worthless, you will become my spokesman. They, for their part, may turn to you, but as for you, you will not turn to them.

A scroll is discovered. Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah consumes the words of this scroll, and he complains to God, but God says, nope, you go forward with what you've learned.

I'm paraphrasing. You're gonna pull the precious from the worthless. When Jeremiah goes forward, there are quite a few things that he says are worthless.

An interesting study, because in Jeremiah's day, he has a lot of religious teachers around saying, no, everything is good. It's good. We've restored the temple.

It's all going to be great. Remember, there's a revival in the land. Everybody's talking about this great revival in the land.

Kings and Chronicles, the official word from the government, says that there is a revival in the land. Things are going well. Jeremiah doesn't get that memo.

Beketzer, in short, here's what he tells Jeremiah. It's not gonna be easy. You've eaten my words that were found.

You're gonna bring forth the precious from the worthless. You're gonna be my mouth. The question is, does Jeremiah bring forth precious things and highlight them, and does he identify things which have become or were always worthless? So what does he say? There are a few things that he says.

One of the things that he says, and Jeremiah says during his career, he says that those who handle the Torah, in fact the word is seized, those who have snatched the Torah, they don't know me. Actually, it's God speaking through Jeremiah. Those who handle the Torah don't know me.

He says they've not given attention. That's chapter 2, verse 8. In chapter 6, verse 19, says that they've not given attention to my words. By the way, these same words that when they were found, Jeremiah ate them.

They didn't pay attention to that, nor did they do anything except to reject the Torah. Chapter 6, verse 19. All of this appears to be, based on just the way that you read it, appears to be in the days of Josiah.

In Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 8, he says, Who are we to say that we are wise and the Torah of the Lord is with us, when in fact the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie? That's what Jeremiah says after he's eaten the words of the true Torah. He says in chapter 9, verse 12 through 13, that they forsook my Torah that I put before them. Now, in the days of Josiah and Jeremiah, a Torah was actually discovered and it was put before him, and he presented this and he says this is the way, walk in it, but they said we will not walk in it.

In Josiah and Jeremiah's days, the scroll that Moses wrote was rediscovered by a priest named Hilkiah. It's the original Moses scroll. It is the scroll that came by Yad Moshi, the original.

It was set before the people. Jeremiah ate these words. What was in the scroll? Do we know? What do our sources provide by way of clues or hints? Now, one thing, and I won't go into this in great detail because I've done it elsewhere, is that if you look at the Reformative Actions, it seems to be, it's very clear that it was a text very similar to Deuteronomy.

Now, some people say, yeah, but if you look at Ezra and Nehemiah, and in their day, Ezra and Nehemiah is not the time that I'm talking about, right? We're focused on 622 BCE, the closest you can get to the original Torah that Moses wrote. We're not talking about one that

Ezra is talking about, and I do think they're different. What we're talking about is the scroll that was found in the days of Josiah, Jeremiah, and Zephaniah.

Jeremiah is shocked. Buying pen of the scribes. If you read Zephaniah, who's also a prophet at the time, Zephaniah says this, the priests have done violence to the Torah.

(1:12:54 - 1:21:21)

They treated it violently. Jeremiah 2.8, again, he says they that handle the law have misused it. Here are a couple of clues just to get us thinking.

Shephon reads it twice. Zephaniah finds it, says, hey, check this out. Shephon goes, reads it, and he takes it to the king.

He reads it before the king. Now, you have to question, how big is it? Well, if we go back to the Pentateuch, most of which is in third person, but still, it's a report. They're reporting on a book.

The book of Deuteronomy, particularly, is talking about a book that they found later. The writer is telling us in Deuteronomy that this book, in Deuteronomy 27, it says, write the words of the Torah of Moses on rocks. Plaster them, write the Torah, the whole thing.

Now, the question is, what was it that they wrote on plaster? Is it Genesis 1.1 through Deuteronomy 34.12? No, it's not. Joshua chapter 8, they actually do that. Not only do they do that, they write a copy of the Torah that Moses wrote, and it says all the words of the Torah, the blessing and the curse, are read.

He gives this idea that you get the idea that it contains instruction, it contains blessings and curses, and by the way, again, and I know people don't quite understand when I stress this, but Deuteronomy chapter 27 talks about a ceremony in which the blessings and curses are read. Cursed be, cursed be, cursed be. There's no blessed be's.

They're missing, but they're supposedly there, but this this Torah that Moses wrote is written on stones. Deuteronomy 31 verses 10 and 11, just paraphrasing, but it says you're gonna read this to the whole congregation, men, women, children, that's all the, everybody gonna read it every seven years. You're gonna read this, you know, and you have to wonder, what is it that they read? I'm not suggesting they couldn't read the whole thing, just take a little while, but just relax, kids.

It's interesting to think that it could be a document that is smaller. Now our Pentateuch tells us what's in that document, it reports on it third-person, somebody's telling us about memories about it, the question is where is it? The reformative actions of Josiah are based on a form of Deuteronomy, that's clear, and I've taught specific proofs of this going through, saying this is what they did, this is where it points to, Deuteronomy, you remember that? In fact, I cover it in in my book. If you haven't read this, it's in chapter 17 of my book that I call the First Great Discovery, so there's no need for me to go over that again, all the details, but you have to look at what did they do and where are they drawing that from.

Now interestingly enough, when the scroll is found, they don't consult Jeremiah, he's been a prophet since the 13th year of Josiah, it's now the 18th year, Jeremiah is not even

mentioned. Like Josiah says, you found the scroll, oh man, well go then to the Mishneh, to the second quarter, and go get Huldah, go talk to Huldah, so they do, and Huldah says, hey about this scroll that you found, oh it's bad, it's bad, it's bad, destruction is coming, but tell the guy that sent you, the king, because he was such, you know, repentant, and he's doing all these good things, tell him he's gonna go to his grave in peace, and they run off and tell him, but after this great reform of Josiah, he dies in a battle by an arrow from Neco. Look with me at 2nd Chronicles chapter 35, 2nd Chronicles 35 verse 20.

After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, I want you to understand, after the 18th year of his reign and the great reform, you don't get anything, this follows right on the heels of that, it says right after he got the temple back in order, that's in the 18th year of his reign, now it's talking the next thing. After that, Neco, king of Egypt, came up to wage war at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him, but Neco sent messengers to him saying, what business do you have with me, king of Judah? I'm not coming against you today, but against the house which I'm at war, and God has told me to hurry. For your own sake, stop interfering with God who is with me, so that he does not destroy you.

However, Josiah would not turn away from him. He disguised himself in order to fight against him, nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, interesting. But he came to wage war in the plain of Megiddo.

The archers shot at King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, take me away for I'm badly wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him on the second chariot which he had and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died and was buried in the tomb of his father's. Remember, King says him die there, but it be that as it may.

All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Then Jeremiah chanted a song of mourning for Josiah, and all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their songs of mourning to this day. They made them an ordinance in Israel.

Behold, they are also written in the Lamentations. So a later writer is telling us that when Josiah died that there were these laments. We don't have the lament anymore from Jeremiah.

We have no record in the biblical account that Jeremiah and Josiah ever met. We do know that when Josiah dies, we do get this reference that Jeremiah sang a lament and that the people sing it to this day, whenever this is written after these times. Now go with me to 2nd Kings chapter 23.

2nd Kings 23 verse 24. Moreover, this is before he's dead obviously, moreover Josiah removed the mediums, the spiritist, household idols, the idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he might fulfill the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of Israel. This is why it's important to look at the things he did because it matches, it leads us to the conclusion that it was some form of the book of Deuteronomy.

Now listen to this verse 25. Before him, meaning Josiah, there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart, all his soul, and all his everything in conformity to the law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. According to the writer of Kings, by the

way that's Deuteronomic language, that phrase with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your everything is only found in Deuteronomy.

(1:21:22 - 1:24:17)

So it's the writer telling us he did this great reform which was in accordance with the scroll that he found. Remember Shephon read it, he took it to the king, he read it again, it's the same one that could be written on rocks, the same one that could be read in a short period of time. When he found this scroll, there's no one like him ever.

Now this is in Kings. Somebody might say, what about David? Well I don't know, it says there was none like him, no king like him, and there was none arising after him. So I mean, sounds like he's, right? Alright.

But this particular text uses the language of the scroll that was found, it would seem, to underscore that he turned to God in accordance with the discovered scroll. Again, another indication that it was a form of a safer that would have language similar to what we see in Deuteronomy. So he dies.

Josiah's dead, the throne will pass to his son. Jeremiah, for his part, continues to prophesy and his sermons, like mine in a way, put him in opposition to others, other religious police. The religious authorities, they don't like a message that goes against what makes them profitable, what makes them successful, what keeps them in authority.

What you're gonna find is the message that Jeremiah preaches is that which he consumed when the words were found in his day, in the days of Josiah, and those words do not agree with what others were preaching. The writer of Kings and Chronicles described a great revival in the days of Josiah and a scroll that was found. The chronicler puts this beautiful period of time in these words, talking about Josiah.

All his days they, the people of the land, did not turn away from following Jehovah, the God of their fathers. That's what chronicler said. Jeremiah, he does know about the scroll that was discovered, says he devoured it when it was discovered, but he's not distracted by any talk about revival.

(1:24:18 - 1:25:27)

See, for Jeremiah, he sees a pot tilted from the north, meaning destruction's coming, and he sees an almond branch blossoming which indicates it will be hastened. He said the Torah was rejected, mishandled, a lying pen had made it a lie. He says that the Torah that was discovered was placed before that generation and it was rejected.

Now, there was another group, prophets and priests, at the time when Jeremiah was saying these things, that don't listen to him, everything's fine, everything is going well, we have the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, we have the sacrifices, we have everything, there's a revival. There has never been a people like this generation that never turned away. See, that's what there's Jeremiah's saying.

(1:25:30 - 1:27:17)

Where? The people were at ease, the temple is restored, the cult is back in operation, the scroll, the words were found, and Jeremiah ate them. Perhaps his words and these sermons

that get him in trouble, that raise the hair on the back of the religious police of his day and ours, finds himself in opposition. I bet there were people that said, I can't listen to Jeremiah anymore, he's preaching something totally different.

We're wise, we have the Torah with us, and he's saying, who are we to say that we're wise and the Torah is with us when the lying pen of the scribes has made it? That's what they're saying, you see? They're saying we're wise, we have the Torah. He's saying, no you don't. You've rejected God's Torah.

You've added to. So people in Jeremiah's day might say, oh he's stripping away all this stuff, he's claiming that this isn't from God, he's taking away, and he's saying, no, I'm telling you to get back to what he actually said, the one that Moses wrote. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is what I'm saying.

Join me next week. We're gonna keep looking at Jeremiah's words, no matter what, and we're gonna continue to search for the actual truth. We're not going to reject it.

Shabbat Shalom, Shavua Tov, see you next Saturday.