

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

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Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

October 2022

This month's article is the 43rd installment of the Israel and Judah history series. "[Israel and Judah: 43. Judah's Last Kings, 2](#)" tells of Jeremiah's attempt to teach righteousness while warning the people of Judah about YHWH's threats to them because of their sinful disobedience and great evil acts. The narratives by the prophet Jeremiah present him telling the people of Judah to obey YHWH, and follow the Covenant that their ancestors pledged at the time of Moses. Jeremiah begged them to obey so they will be blessed by God in all aspects of their life and not cursed because of their sins against YHWH.

If they did not do so, that same Covenant will cause YHWH to punish the people of Judah and exile them to a foreign land, just as He did to the people of the northern ten tribes of Israel.

Idolatry and worshipping other gods must stop, or the threatened punishments will soon follow. Another imperative of the Covenant is that rulers, religious and secular, must make impartial and righteous judgments among the people. This is because Israel's rulers represent and act on behalf of YHWH. In fact, God charged with crimes, judged, and sentenced *elohim* (gods, Psalm 82) to severe punishment:

"I Myself have said: 'You are elohim, And sons of the Supreme are all of you. Yet [1] you shall die like common humanity [adam], And like any other of the chiefs [2] you shall fall.'"

• **Psalm 82:5-7**

The horrific sins and evils the people of Judah were committing against God's commandments, while victimizing their own Israelite brethren of all social classes, would soon force YHWH to greatly punish them. Those sins and evils included magic and human sacrifice to pagan gods.¹ Yet the kings, leaders, and people refused to acknowledge their sins and change their ways.

After the death of the last good king Josiah, the people of Judah returned to a steady and swift decline toward destruction and exile when God removed all restraints to His judgments. God's true prophets throughout the generations, while few, tried to teach the people to follow God's Covenant. The prophets predicted and warned Judah of soon-to-come punishments, described with gruesome detail.

The Book of Jeremiah is the largest book in the Bible. Yet there is a problem with Jeremiah: it is not in a chronological order even though some portions have specific dates that relate to years of the last kings of Judah. Those dated portions are not sequential.

The narrative portions of the prophetic Book of Jeremiah do fill some gaps in our understanding of historical events during the last years of Judah's decline. Jeremiah's narratives must be put in the right order and related to other biblical histories. To do so may unlock relationships to prophetic secrets in Isaiah, Jeremiah (and Lamentations), Ezekiel, as well as the Minor prophets and other books such as Psalms and even the Book of Job. Although the order and structure of Jeremiah's prophecies are problematic and difficult, some parts of Jeremiah's writing are compelling and even frightening.² We have much to learn.

¹ See my articles "[Magic in the Bible](#)" and "[Human Sacrifice in Scripture](#)." Yes, they were doing such things and more in Judah and in Jerusalem in the time of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets faithful to YHWH in their time.

² Large sections of Jeremiah have chronological identifications such as "**In the beginning of the kingship of Jehoiakim son of Josiah ...**" (Jeremiah 26:1-24 and 27:1). In other prophecies of YHWH in Jeremiah we are given specific years, such as Jehoiakim's 4th year (Jeremiah 25:1, 36:1, 45:1 and 46:2) and 5th year (Jeremiah 36:9). Even then, why are we given such dates? They are not always useful to help us understand the message, whether in Jeremiah's time or for a prophetic fulfillment future to today.

Cast of Characters:

YHWH. Creator of heaven and earth, the Lord God Almighty, the only true God and judge of His people Israel. YHWH chooses prophets to take His message to His people Judah. The people easily reject their Covenant with YHWH even after a recent renewal of the Covenant, as in the glorious Passover festival led by King Josiah. Yet, without God's Holy Spirit, the people of Judah did not stop their gross idolatry during Josiah's reign. After his death, they more openly practiced sin and idolatry. They did the opposite of what YHWH required and the opposite of what they promised. The people of Judah knew that YHWH punished and destroyed the northern Kingdom of Samaria (Israel), witnessed by all the people of Judah decades before. They did not care. The ultimate punishments were to dismantle the Kingdom of Judah and exiling its people to Babylon as slaves.

Jeremiah. Prophet of God. In this episode Jeremiah comes to the foreground of events. The Book of Jeremiah begins in the 13th year of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:2). Jeremiah wrote the Book of Lamentations both to lament the death of Josiah, but also to lament (and warn) of YHWH's future punishment and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem.

Baruch. Faithful assistant to Jeremiah, was a scribe and public reader of God's prophecies. When Jeremiah was not allowed to speak to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, Baruch read them publicly in the Temple. He will later face his own crisis of faith, as he laments Judah's destruction before it happens.

Jehoiakim. King of Judah for 11 years. Nothing good is said about him. He was evil for all his reign. YHWH gave prophecies specific to him; he ignored them. He murdered true prophets, and favored false prophets and priests. Perhaps he thought YHWH was like the pagan gods he worshipped.

Pharaoh Neco. This Egyptian leader meets Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. They fight a famous battle at Carchemish, with a Babylonian victory. Egypt will be invaded and powerless for a long time.

Nebuchadnezzar. King of Babylon, in the time of Jeremiah captured Judah and Jerusalem, but did not destroy the capital city. Nebuchadnezzar should be studied in Scripture and in history as a model for the future Antichrist ruler of the world before Christ returns.

Thank You

The Holy Scriptures are truly a bottomless source of information about God for us to learn from and teach to others. The more we learn about God, the more there is to learn. This not only applies to ASK but to you, the audience for ASK's teachings. ASK is worthy of your support. Some of you have been reading and supporting Dr. Martin's "independent" research since the mid-1970s, as I have, approaching almost 50 years of material.

Note this passage that the Israelites were not able to learn. I am using a quote from the February 2022 Newsletter. Even today God has not opened the minds of His people Israel to receive what Solomon wrote:

"For Yahweh Himself gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and comprehension; He stores up sagacity [cleverness] for the upright, A shield for those walking with integrity, So as to preserve the paths of right judgment, And so He may guard the way of His benign ones.

Then you shall understand righteousness and right judgment, And you shall be upright in every good route; For wisdom shall come into your heart, And knowledge, it shall be pleasant to your soul."

Proverbs 2:6–10. Concordant Literal Old Testament

Help us to keep working to get that mature teaching to the world as God leads people to read, listen, and learn. Thank you for supporting ASK, so others can continue to learn along with you.

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com