

Ministering Prophetically to our Contemporary World

Dr. Kelvin Friebel

Session 1: 6 May 2023 (Saturday)

Session 2: 16 May 2023 (Tuesday)

Session 3: 17 May 2023 (Wednesday)

Genesis
Exodus
Pentateuch
Leviticus
(Law)
Deuteronomy

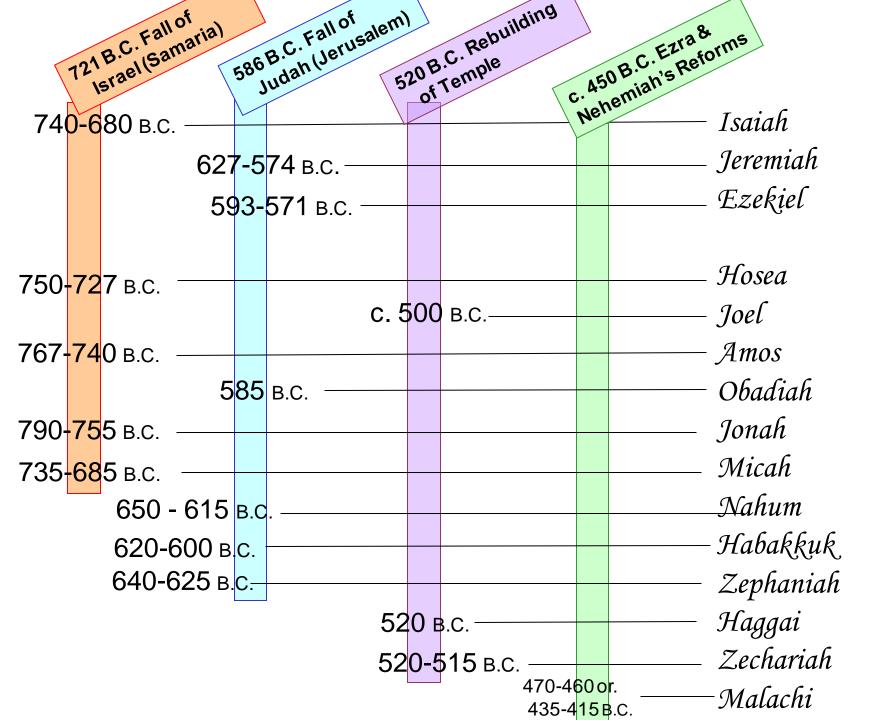
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah

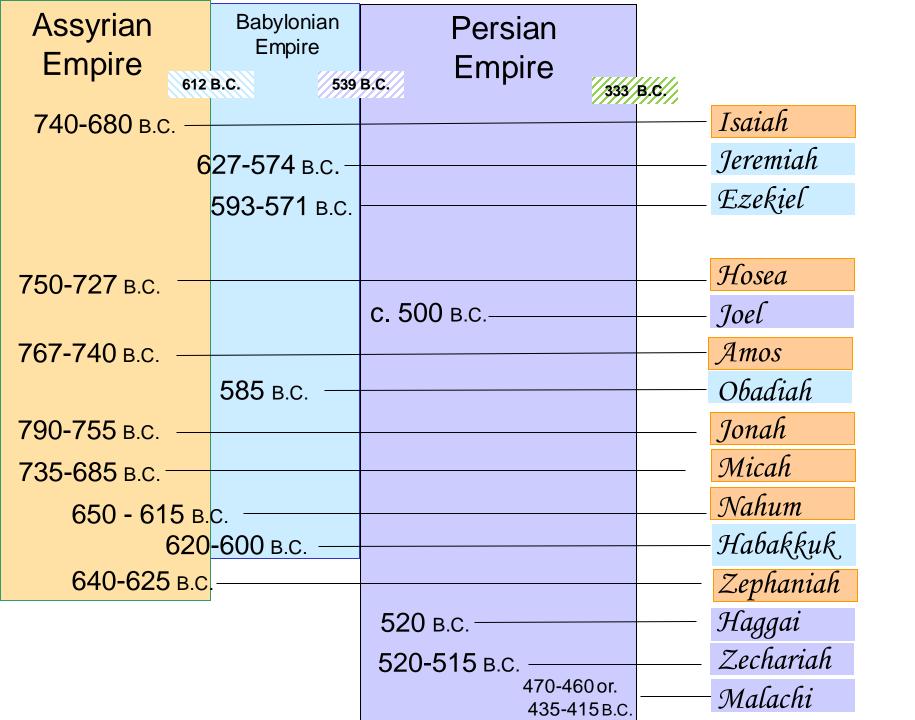
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs
Poetic & Wisdom

Esther

Prophets

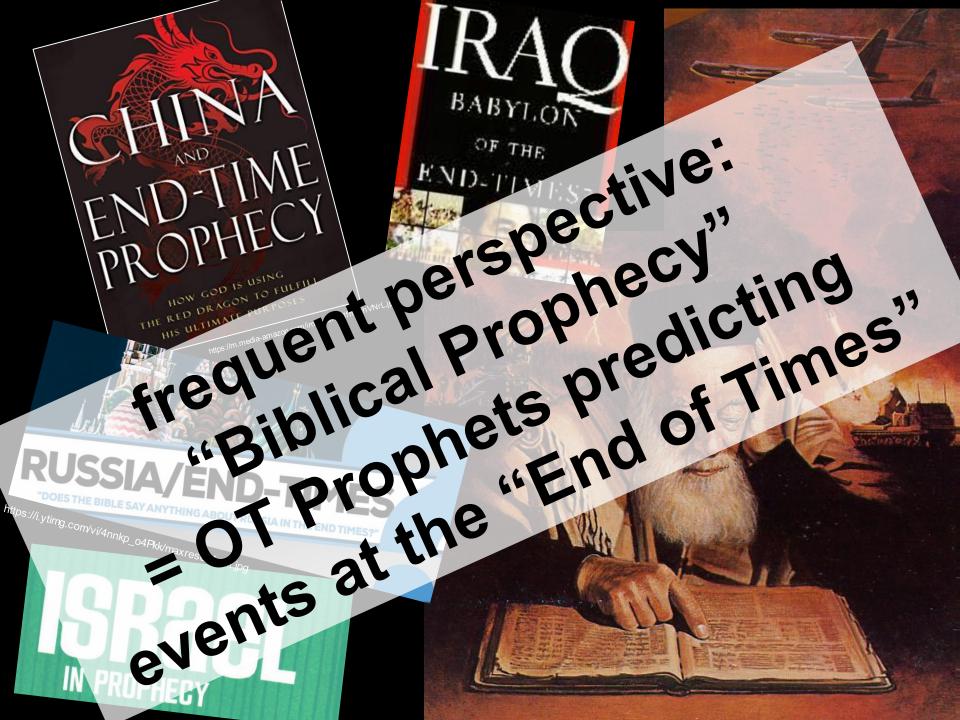
Isaiah Jeremiah **Major** Lamentations **Prophets** Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah **Minor Prophets** Jonah Micah = "Book of Nahum the Twelve" Habakkuk, Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi





What is Old Testament "Prophecy"?

(as, for instance, it would be understood in the Book of Jeremiah)



Inaccurate Assumptions in that type of Perspective of OT Prophecy

- All Prophecy is "Prediction"
- Significant Part of OT Prophecy relates to the "End Times"

Since we are in the "End Times",
 OT Prophecy is predicting
 Contemporary Events

What is Old Testament "Prophecy"?

From the combined total of <u>all</u> the prophecies of the OT Prophetic Books,

estimate what percentage (%) of OT Prophecy is:

Predictions of the "Future"

Prediction of "future" events from the vantage point of the OT prophet

Predictions of the "End Times"

Old Testament "Prophecy"

(1) Foretelling Prophecy = Future-Oriented = Prediction

(2) Forthtelling Prophecy

- = Present-Oriented
- = Messages primarily applicable to the Prophets' Audiences

(1) Foretelling Prophecy = Future-Oriented = Prediction

God's Plans and Intentions with respect to the Future:

- Coming Judgment
- Coming Restoration

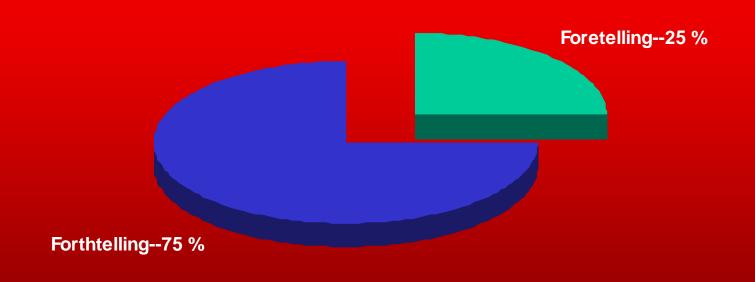
(2) Forthtelling Prophecy

- = Present -Oriented
- = Messages primarily applicable to the Prophets' Audiences

God's Critique of the Current Situation:

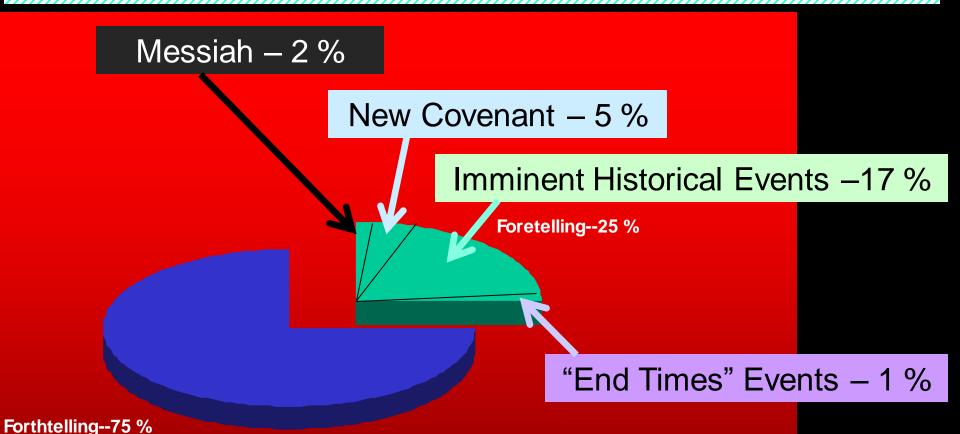
- ► Advice as to what to do in the present
- ▶ Indicting for / Accusing of sins
- ► Calls to repent
- Exhortations to live out the covenant obligations
- Encouraging continued faithful living according to the covenant

Only about 25 % of OT Prophecy deals with the prediction of future events (Foretelling)



75 % of OT Prophecy deals with the current situation & condition during the prophets' time (Forthtelling)

How much of Foretelling Prophecy deals with yet-to-come "end times"?



How should we properly Read & Interpret Old Testament Prophecy?

PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

(with respect to the message)

iS

Theological

that is, it is trying to inform about

Who God is

& How God Works

& What God's People should be doing
in light of what God is doing

The FUNCTION of Prophecy

(with respect to that which it is trying to accomplish)

is

to Persuade

► that is, they were trying to produce a change (both in thinking & doing) in the audience,

not merely

to Communicate Information of what would happen

Forthtelling Present-Oriented Non-Predictive

Persuasive / Rhetorical Intent



Give Advice (e.g., Jer 27)

People Heed the Advice



Indict (accuse) the people for sins (e.g., Jer 35)

People acknowledge they have sinned



Call the people to Repent

People repent



Exhort the people to live according to the covenant

 People renew commitment to live according to the covenant

PERSUASIVE FUNCTION OF PROPHECY

is obvious with respect to Forthtelling

Present-Oriented Critique

But what about

Foretelling

Prediction?

Foretelling Prophecy

= Future-Oriented = Prediction

God's Plans and Intentions with respect to the Future:

- Judgment
- Restoration



Elicit the Appropriate Response of turning / trusting God, rather than a "Fatalistic" Submission to the Inevitable

Jonah (KGF)

- 3:1 The word of Yahweh was to Jonah ...
- "Rise up, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation that I am telling to you."

Prediction (Foretelling)

4b And he proclaimed, and he said:
"Yet forty days,
and Nineveh will be overthrown!"

What was the purpose or function of the "prediction"?

Was it merely to give the people of Nineveh the "information" that the city would be destroyed & that such would happen in 40 days?



IMG_5148.JPG

picasaweb.google.com

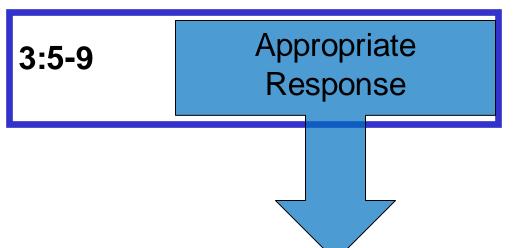
Day Jonah prophesied the destruction of Nineveh



Appropriate Response

- 3:5 And the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the smallest of them.7a And (the king) caused it to be cried out and said:
- 8b "And let them turn, each one, from their evil ways, and from the violence that is in their hands.
 - 9 Who knows? Attitude toward the "Prediction" God may turn and may relent (i.e., change his mind); and turn from his fierce anger, and we will not perish."





God
Responds by
Not Brining
the Disaster

3:10 And God saw their deeds,
that they turned from their evil ways;
and God relented (i.e., changed his mind)
concerning the evil (calamity)
that he had spoken to do against them;
and he did not do (it).

Original Prediction does not Occur

The FUNCTION of Prophecy

(with respect to that which it is trying to accomplish)

is

to Persuade

(that is, to elicit an audience response)

Key Interpretation Issue:

What kind of response is this prophecy intending to elicit in the audience?

1) Read it for its THEOLOGY of who God is & how God works

Contemporary Application:

How does the way in which God worked back then inform us of how God is working today?

2) Discern the Persuasive Intent

of what audience response is being sought

Contemporary Application:

How can the theological message of the prophecy be applied to us today,

so as to produce a similar response?

What was an OT "Prophet"?

Intermediaries between God& the people

(1) Messenger:

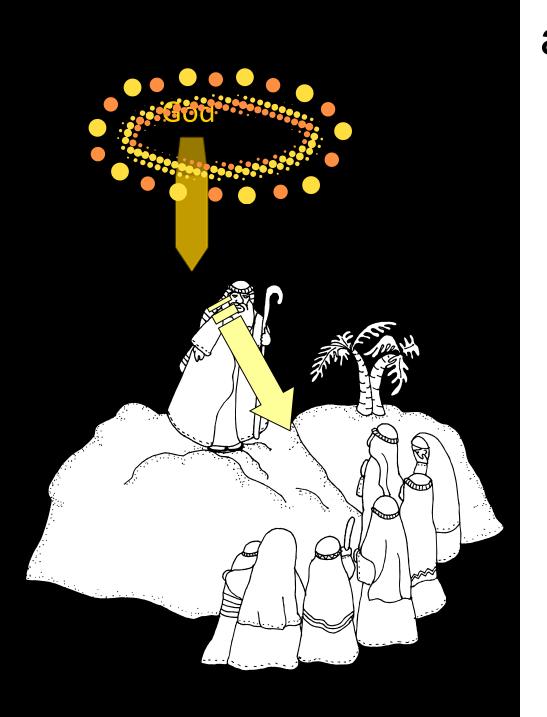
Communicated the Divine Message to the People

(2) Intercessor:

Communicated People's Requests to God

OT Terms for "Prophet":

- ► Reception of Message from God
 - 1) "Seer" הֹאֶרֹ (*rō'eh*)
 - 2) "Visionary" הֹוֶּה (ḥōzeh)
- Relationship with God & Accompanying Social Authority
 - 3) "Man of God"
- ► Messenger: Transmission of Message
 - 4) "prophet" אָבִיא (nā<u>b</u>î')



as an Intermediary, functioned as:

(1) Messenger:

Communicated the Divine Message to the People

The Prophet's Role as a "Messenger"

is evident through the use of the

"Messenger Formula"

"Thus says Yahweh (the Lord) . . . "

In non-prophet contexts, messengers began their messages with "Thus says (so-and-so)" to authenticate that the message originated with the one sending them:

Personal Messages

Genesis 32:3-5 Genesis 45:9

Official / Royal Messages (Diplomatic Negotiations)

Numbers 22:15-16 Judges 11:14-15 1 Kings 20:2-3

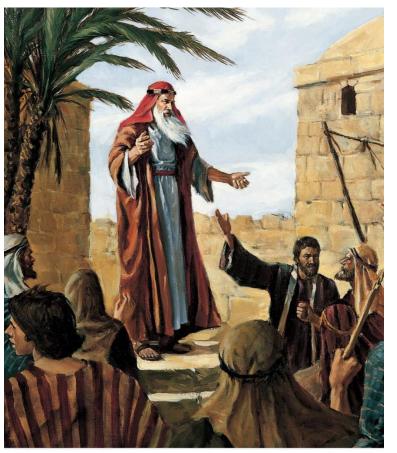
Official / Royal Decrees
 2 Chronicles 36:22-23

The Prophet's Role as a "Messenger"

is evident through the use of the

"Messenger Formula"

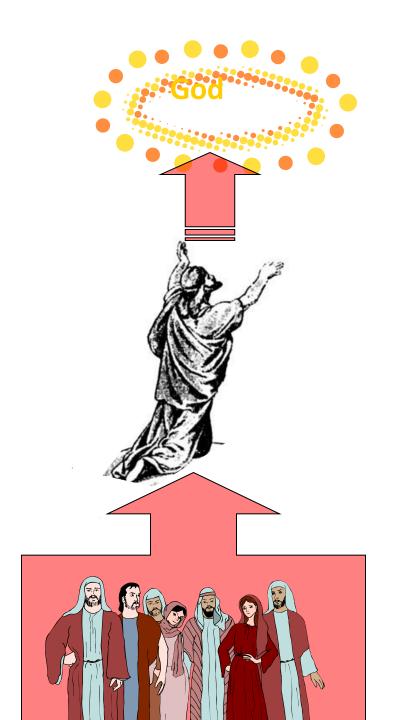
"Thus says Yahweh (the Lord) . . . "



indicates that:

(a) The prophet is not the source of the message,but is only the messenger who communicates it

But, (b) the prophet does have the authority to communicate it because they have been sent by the one giving the message.



as an Intermediary, functioned as:

(2) Intercessor:

Communicated
People's Requests
to God

Intercessor Role in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 43 (WEB) 1 Then all the captains of the forces, . . . and all the people from the least even to the greatest, came near

² and said to Jeremiah the prophet,

"Please let our supplication be presented before you, and pray for us to Yahweh your God, . . .

that Yahweh your God may show us the way in which we should walk, and the things that we should do."

⁴Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them,

"I have heard you.

Behold, I will pray to Yahweh your God according to your words; and it will happen that whatever thing Yahweh answers you, I will declare it to you.

I will keep nothing back from you."

⁷ After ten days, Yahweh's word came to Jeremiah.

Intercessor Role in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 7:16 (WEB)

16 "Therefore don't pray for this people.

Don't lift up a cry or prayer for them or make intercession to me; for I will not hear you.

Call Narratives

Jeremiah: Jer ch. 1

Moses: Exodus 3:1 - 4:17 Pattern or all other "prophetic calls"

Gideon: Judges ch. 6

Isaiah: Isa 6:1-13

Ezekiel: Ezek 1:1 – 3:14

Prophetic Commissioning (Call) Narrative Genre Components

*Key Component around which all other elements are built & attached

▶ Commissioning

- Divine Giving of the Task: "Go", "I send", "I appoint"
- Specification of the Role: prophetic messenger
- Summary of the Task: "speak, 'Thus says Yahweh'"

Prophetic Commissioning (Call) Narrative

Commissioning

- Divine Giving of the Task: "Go", "I send", "I appoint"
- Specification of the Role: prophetic messenger
- Summary of the Task: "speak, 'Thus says Yahweh'"

Attached Motifs:

- Difficulty of the Task / Opposition
 - Re-Assurance (in light of the Opposition)
 - "Do Not Be Afraid"
 - Divine Presence: "I Will be With You"
 - Divine Deliverance of the prophet
 - Divine Fortifying of the prophet
 - Preparatory Equipping
 - **■** Objection / Reluctance
 - Warning re: Failure to Carry Out Task

Jeremiah 1:4-19 Commissioning / Call Narrative

Ia. Commissioning (vv. 4-10)



II. 2 Visions (vv. 11-16)

II.a Guarantees the Message -----

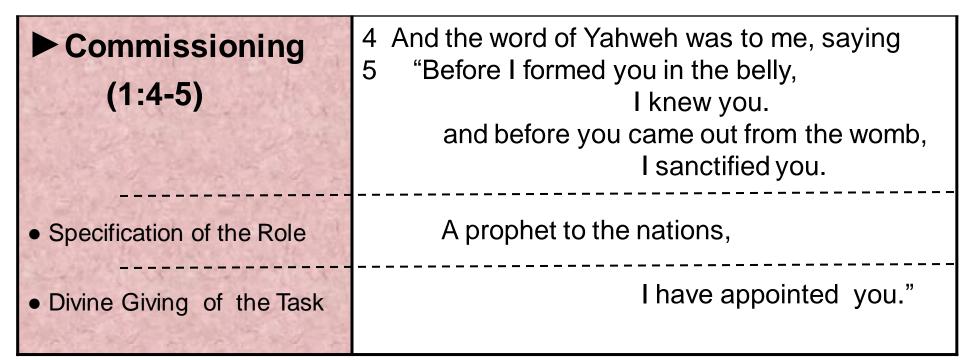
Re-Assurance

II.b Summary of Message Content

Commissioning

Ib. Commissioning Restatement (vv. 17-19)

Jeremiah's (ch. 1) Commissioning (Call)



▶ Commissioning

- Specification of the Role
- Divine Giving of the Task

1:5b a prophet to the nations,

I have appointed you."



■ Objection / Reluctance

1:6 And I said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! Behold, I do not know (how) to speak; for I am a young person."



■ Re-Assurance

- Countering the Objection
- Restatement of Commissioning

- "Do Not be Afraid"
- Divine Presence
- Divine Deliverance

1:7 And Yahweh said to me, "Do not say, `I am a young person.'

> For to whomever I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. whatever I command you.

- 1:8 Do not be afraid before them,
 - for I am with you
 - to deliver you"

▶ Commissioning

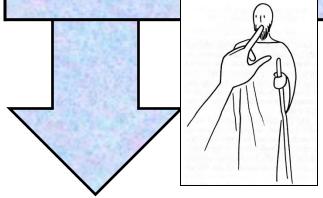
- Specification of the Role
- Divine Giving of the Task

1:5b a prophet to the nations,

I have appointed you."

PreparatoryEquipping

1:9 AndYahweh sent out his hand,
and touched my mouth.
And Yahweh said to me,
"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth."



► Re-statement of Commissioning

- Divine Giving of the Task
- Summary of the Task

1:10 See, I have appointed you, this day, over the nations and over the kingdoms, to uproot and to pull down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

▶ Commissioning Restatement

- Divine Giving of the Task
- Specification of the Role

1:17a "And you, gird up your loins, and you will rise up, and you will speak to them all that I command you.

■ Warning

1:17b Do not be shattered because of them, lest I shatter you before them.

■ Re-Assurance

• Divine Fortifying

1:18 And I, behold, have made you, today, into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into bronze walls, against all the earth--against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land.

Opposition

1:19a And they will fight against you;

■ Re-Assurance

- Divine Deliverance
- Divine Presence
- Divine Deliverance

1:19b but they shall not prevail against you;

for I am with you"

"to deliver you."

Re-Assurance Motif:

God Guarantees the Message

(First Vision)

1:11 And the word of Yahweh was to me, saying: "What are you seeing, Jeremiah?"

And I said,

"A branch of an almond (tree), I am seeing."

1:12 And Yahweh said to me,

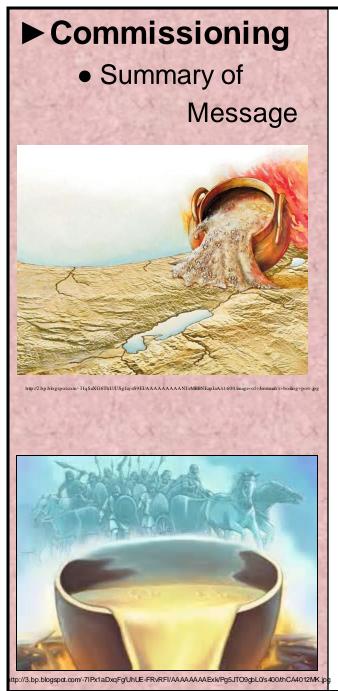
"You have seen well; for I watch over my word to do it."



"almond (tree)" = *šāqēd (שָׁקֵד)*

"watch over" = *šoqēd (שׁקֵד)*

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/Almond_blossom.jpg



(Second Vision)

1:13 And the word of Yahweh was to me a second time, saying, "What are you seeing?"

I said, "A boiling pot, I am seeing. and its opening (lit., face) is from the north."

1:14 And Yahweh said to me:

"From the north, the evil/disaster will open up upon all the inhabitants of the earth."

1:15 "For behold, I am calling to all the families of the kingdoms of the north"
--declaration of Yahweh.

"And they will come, and they will place, each one, their throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls surround (it), and against all the cities of Judah.

1:16 And I will speak my judgments with them,

against all their evil

(with) which they have forsaken me.

And they have burned incense to other gods,
and they have worshiped the works

of their hands."

What is the Purpose of Recounting the Prophet's Call / Commissioning?

- Socially Authenticates them as a "prophet"
 - it acts as their "ministry credentials" as a prophet
 - it authenticates that the message does not originate with them, rather, they are merely the "messenger", proclaiming the divinely-given message
 - it shows they are under divine compulsion (rather than it being their choice or desire)
 & they "need" to proclaim the prophetic messages

Jeremiah

from priestly family of Anathoth

(~ 4-5 km NE of Jerusalem)

▶ did not function as priest (see 1 Kgs 2:26-27)



1 The words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth, in the Land of Benjamin.

one of 13 Levitical cities: Joshua 21:18

Jeremiah

- ▶ prophesied in Jerusalem
- ► prophecies date from 627 c. 580 B.C.
 - 2 who the word of Yahweh was to him,
 in the days of Josiah,
 son of Amon, king of Judah,
 in the thirtieth year of his reign.
 627 B.C
 - 3 And it was (to him) in the days of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

see also Jer 25:3

586 B.C.

Jeremiah

▶ taken to Egypt in 582 B.C. against his will

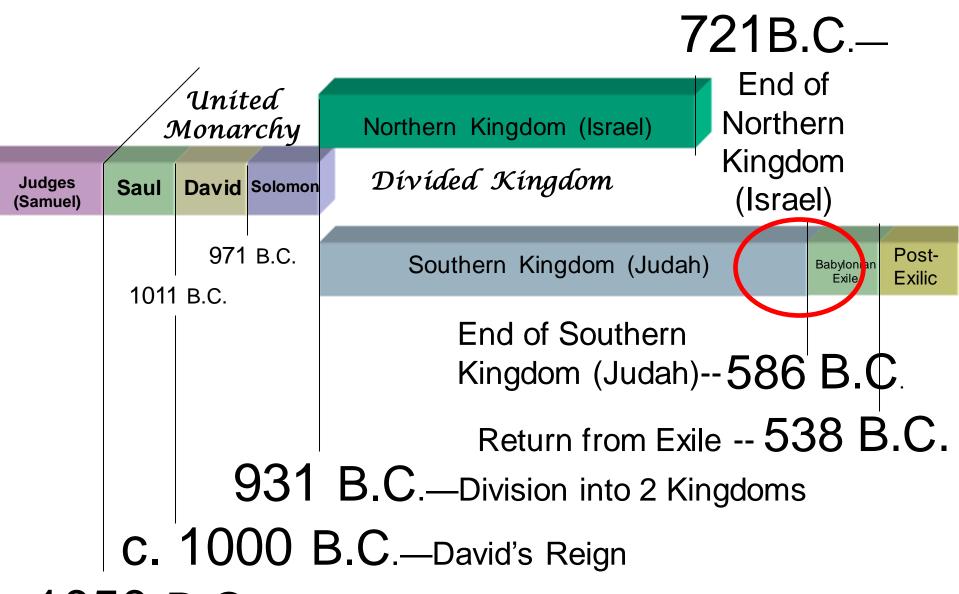
see Jer 43-44

▶ his scribe was Baruch

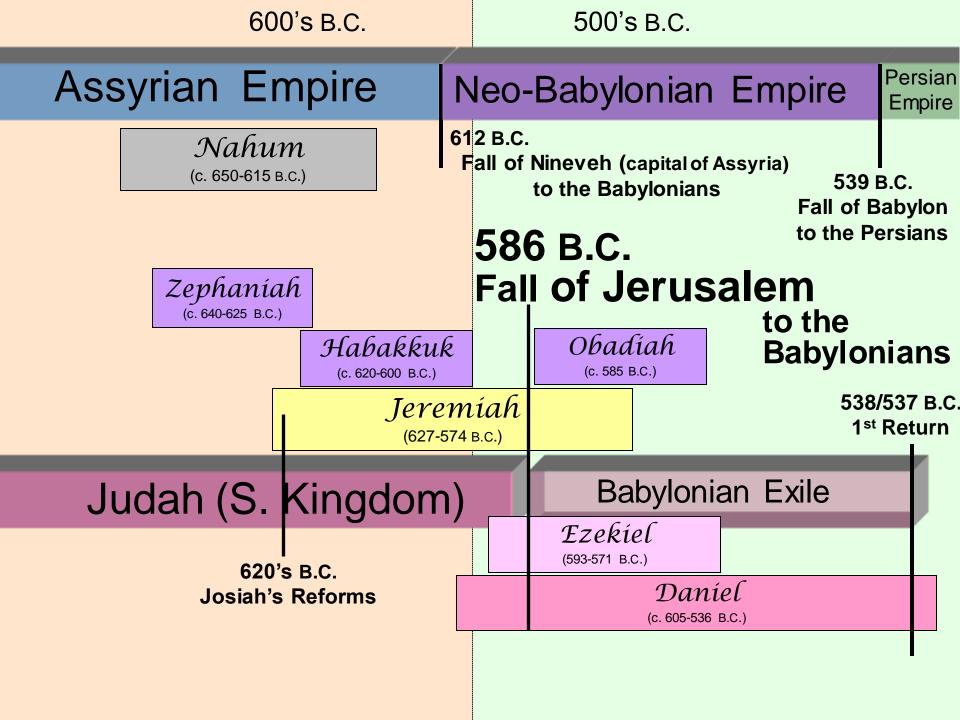
see Jer 36 & 45



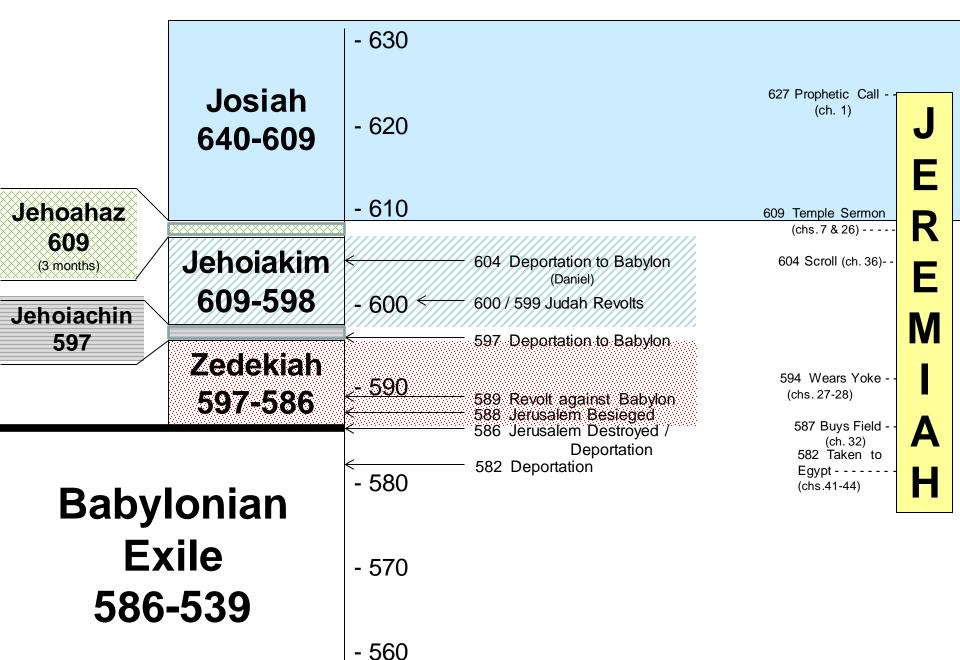
Key Dates in Israel's History



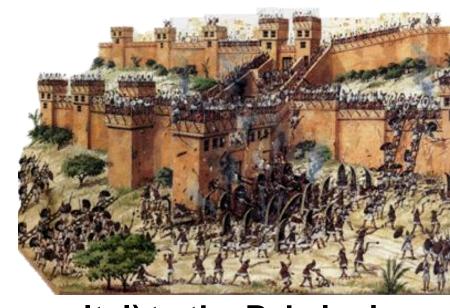
1050 B.C.—beginning of the Monarchy (Kingship)



Judah: 7th - 6th Centuries B.C.

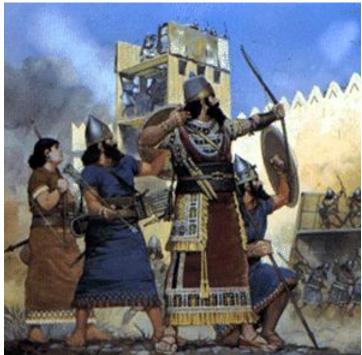


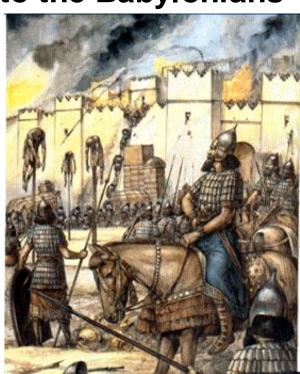


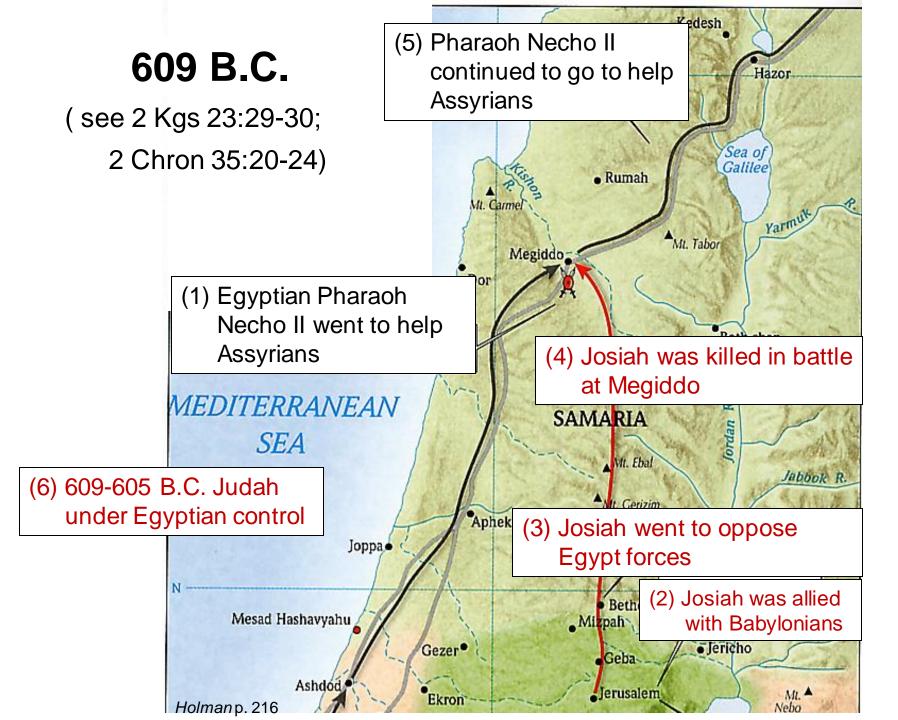


612 B.C. Fall of Nineveh (Assyrian capital) to the Babylonians

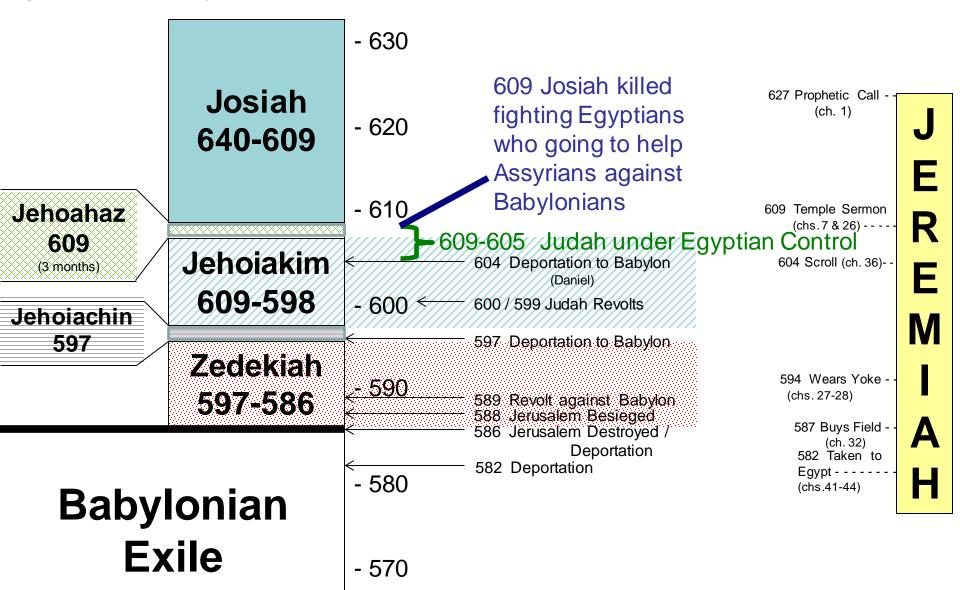








Judah: 7th - 6th Centuries B.C.



- 560

586-539



Battle of Carchemish



http://www.ldsces.org/inst_manuals/ot-in-2/images/22-00.gif

598-597 B.C.

- ► Jehoiakim's revolt (600/599 B.C.) brings the Babylonian army into Judah
- ► Jehoiakim dies & his son, Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) becomes king

2 Kings 24 (NIV)

- ⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.
- ¹⁰ At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it,
- ¹² Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him.

In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon (597 B.C.),

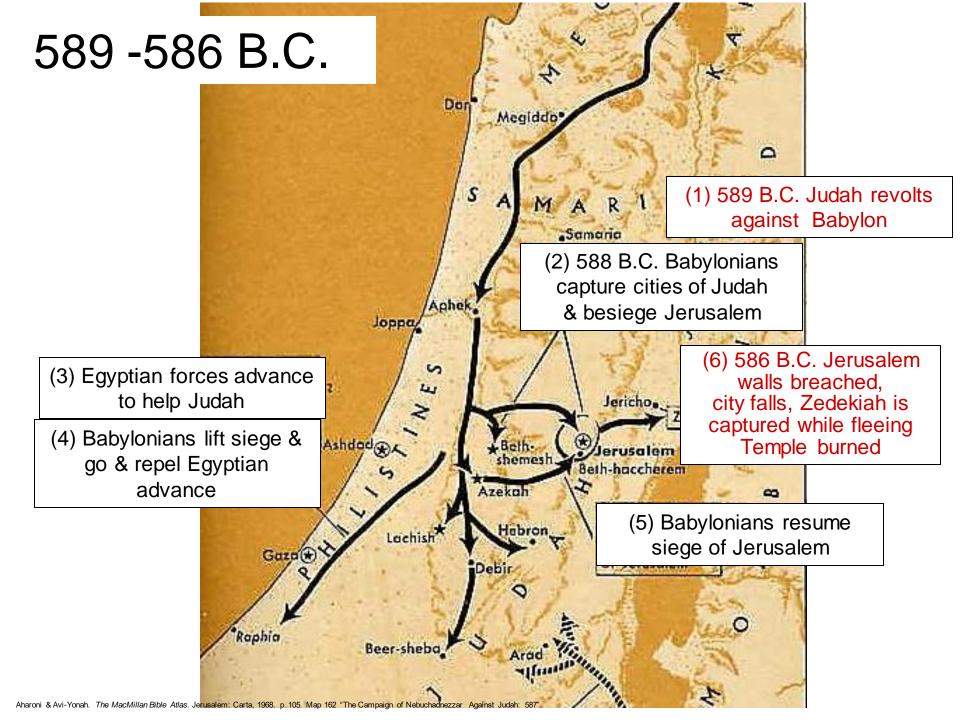
he took Jehoiachin prisoner.

14 He carried all Jerusalem into exile:
all the officers and fighting men,
and all the skilled workers and artisans
—a total of ten thousand.

Only the poorest people of the land were left.

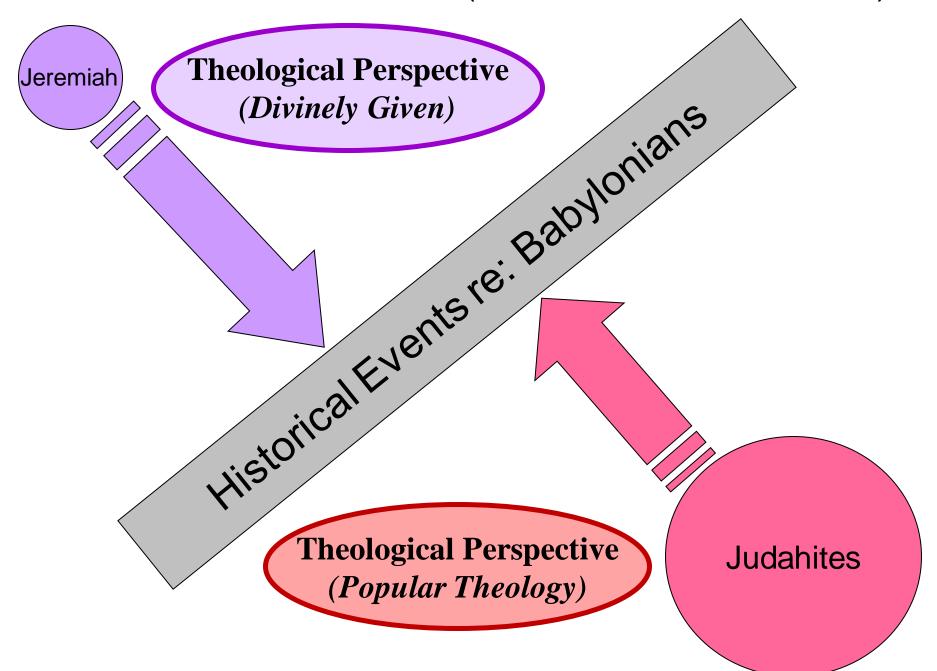
(deportation of Ezekiel to Babylonia)







Pre-586 B.C. Situation (Before Fall of Jerusalem)



Pre-586 B.C. Situation (Before Fall of Jerusalem)

People's Theological Perspective (Popular Theology)

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

- 1) Nature of the *Covenant Relationship* between God & His People
- 2) The People's Possession of the Promised *Land*
- 3) The Permanence of the *Davidic Dynasty*
- 4) Jerusalem as God's Chosen City
- 5) The *Temple* as God's Dwelling Place

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

1) Nature of the Covenant Relationship

Blessings were Unconditional

(God will always bless, regardless of what His People do)

Blessings were Contingent upon Obedience

(God blesses the righteous; God punishes for sin)

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

2) The Land

Land was Irrevocably Promised

(God would never take the Land away from His People regardless of what they did)

Possession of the Land was Contingent upon the People's Obedience

(God would remove the People from the Land if they were disobedient)

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

3) The Kingship Dynasty of David

God was Obligated to Ensure a Davidic Ruler

(There would always be a Ruler from the line of David over God's People)

Promises to David could be Suspended by Disobedience

(God would remove the Davidic Ruler if they were disobedient)

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

4) Jerusalem

"Inviolability of Zion"

(God would always protect Jerusalem / Zion & never let it be captured) God's Defending the City was Contingent upon the People's Obedience

(God would let the city be captured when the people were disobedient)

Jeremiah's Theological Perspective

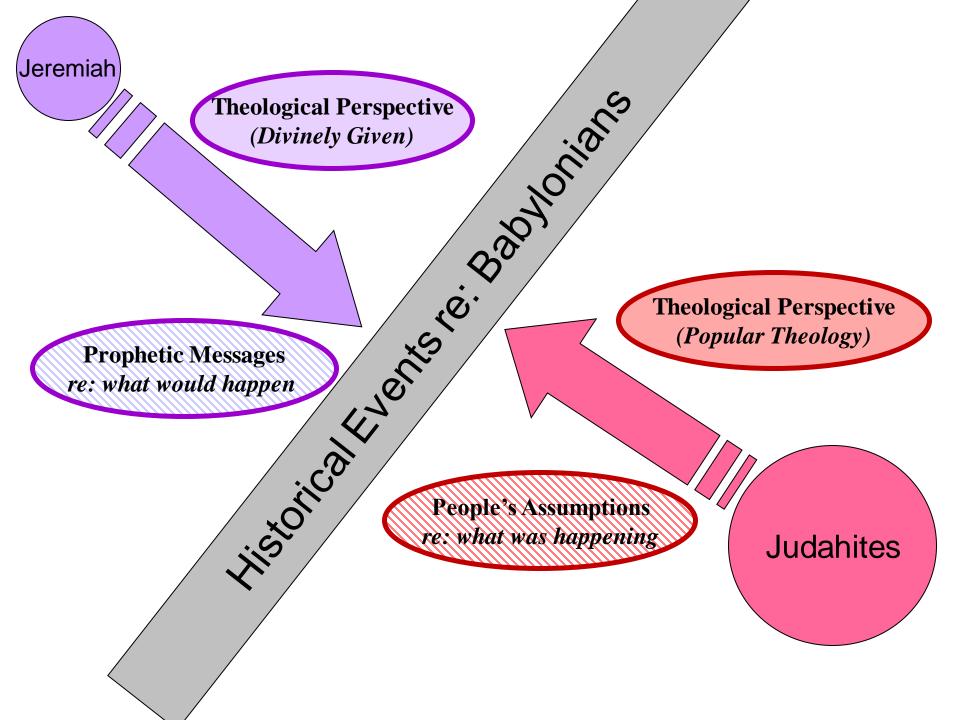
5) The Temple

As the Dwelling Place of God, He was Unconditionally Bound to the Site

(God would never let the Temple be destroyed)

God's Presence in the Temple was Contingent upon the People's Obedience

(If God removed His Presence, the Temple could be destroyed)



People's Assumptions

► People did not believe that they had sinned

(at least to the degree of deserving severe punishment)

Jer 2:35 yet you said,

'For I am innocent . . .'

Behold, I will enter into
judgment with you
on account of your saying,
'I have not sinned.'

Jeremiah's Messages

◆ People have indeed sinned

(thus Jeremiah was trying to convince the people of that)

People's Assumptions

► People mistakenly assumed that, even if they had sinned, because of Yahweh's covenant promises, He would NOT severely punish them

Jeremiah's Messages

Since the People had indeed sinned, based on the covenant, punishment would come as declared

(unless the people repented)

People's	Jeremiah's
Assumptions	Messages
➤ People saw no need to, & refused to Repent	

People's	Jeremiah's
Assumptions	Messages
► focused only on the "promises" to the people, David, & the Temple that Yahweh would preserve them "forever"	

People's Assumptions	Jeremiah's Messages
 → resulted in false perspective that: God would deliver & protect Jerusalem 	 → attempted to dissuade them of the "false" hope, by continually declaring that: • God would bring disaster by the Babylonians
& the Temple would be spared Those already in Exile would soon return	 Jerusalem & the Temple would be destroyed They would go into Exile for a long time

Types of Literature in *Jeremiah*:

A = prophetic oracles in poetry chs. 1-24

B = biographical narratives chs. 19;1 - 20:6 & chs. 26 - 45

C = prophetic messages in prose sermonic style

(embedded within A & B material)

- 3:6-13; 7:1 8:3; 11:1-5, 9-14; 18:1-12; 21:1-10; 22:1-5;
- 25:1-11a; 29:1-23; 32:1-2, 6-16; 34:1-22; 35:1-19; 39:15-18; 44:1-14; ch. 45

The Book of Jeremiah Structuring Principle: Topical Groupings

 Septuagint (LXX) – 1/8th shorter than Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)

Septuagint Vaticanus





4Q70-72: Jeremiah: http://www.bib-arch.org/online-exclusives/dead-sea-scrolls-05.asp?CaveID=4

 Septuagint (LXX) has a different arrangement of the chapters than Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)

LXX 1:1--25:13 32:1--51:35 (Oracles Against the Foreign Nations) 25:14--31:44