

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 55.6%

Weekly Readings will cover:

Sunday: 2 Kings 23:26-37, 2 Chronicles 35:20-23, 2 Chronicles 36:1-5 & Jeremiah 22:1-23

Monday: Jeremiah 48

Tuesday: Jeremiah 26

Wednesday: Jeremiah 25

Thursday: Jeremiah 36 & Jeremiah 45

Friday: Jeremiah 46, Jeremiah 47, 2 Kings 24:1-7 & 2 Chronicles 36:6-8

Saturday: Jeremiah 19 & Jeremiah 20

Current # of email addresses in the group: 625

Happy Sabbath! By my count we have now finished our 21st, 22nd and 23rd books of God's Word (Nahum, Habakkuk & Zephaniah). This week has been a bit tricky to layout chronologically, so bear with me as we jump around a bit through Jeremiah. I hope you each enjoy your new study week!

The audio archive information is available on our UCG Bay Area YouTube page here:

https://youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792?si=EA_tacLBfv1XR3jH

You may actually prefer accessing it directly from this Playlist tab:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792/playlists>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 86

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 575 – SUNDAY: January 19th

2 Kings 23:26-37, 2 Chronicles 35:20-23, 2 Chronicles 36:1-5 & Jeremiah 22:1-23

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “Despite the incredible reforms under Josiah, the changes for the people were only superficial and God knew it would not be long before they were openly rebelling against Him again. They had shown their true colors under the wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon—and inside they were really no different. So God pronounces calamity on Judah. But remember that He had promised before that this calamity would not come until after Josiah's death ([2](#)

[Kings 22:16-20](#)). And eventually, his death came—13 years after his great Passover, and three years after the fall of Nineveh.

"Pharaoh Necho [II] (609-594 b.c.) was the recently crowned king of Egypt's twenty-sixth dynasty. During the long years of Josiah's reign (640-609 b.c.), Assyrian power had steadily crumbled until, as Nahum had predicted, Nineveh itself had fallen (612 b.c.) to a coalition of Chaldeans, Medes, and others. The surviving Assyrian forces had regrouped at Haran. Because Egypt was a long-standing ally of Assyria [since its integration into the empire several decades earlier], Necho journeyed northward to help the beleaguered Assyrians" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on [2 Kings 23:29-30](#)). The King James Version incorrectly has Necho marching *against* the Assyrians.

"Pharaoh Necho turned up in Judah at the head of a more impressive-looking Egyptian army than had been fielded in centuries. Taking advantage of Assyrian decline, Necho's father Psammetichus I [who had been appointed pharaoh by Assyrian emperor Ashurbanipal] had greatly revived his country's clout as a superpower" (Ian Wilson, *The Bible Is History*, 1999, p. 174). "Emboldened by his success... Psammetichus refused to continue payment of tribute to Assyria...though Egypt remained more or less an ally of Assyria until his death and even beyond" (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 439). Perhaps Necho at this later time was not so much interested in restoring Assyria as he was in keeping a balance among the Mesopotamian powers. If Assyria were utterly eliminated, Babylon would fill the void as an unchecked power, creating major problems for Egypt. In any event, Necho advanced up the coastal plain, through Philistine territory. But this area was now under the control of Judah's king, Josiah.

"A Hebrew letter written in his time has been found at 'Mesad Hashavyahu,' a fortress built on the coast between Jabneh and Ashdod. According to the letter, an Israelite governor resided at the fort; thus, Josiah ruled also over this area, expanding his kingdom at the expense

of the Philistine cities" (Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 1977, p. 102). Indeed, remember that, apparently with earlier help from the Scythians, Josiah's "purification of worship was carried out not only in Jerusalem and Judah, but also 'in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali...throughout the land of Israel' ([2 Chron. 34:6-7](#)). Thus, we may assume that Josiah again ruled in all these areas and annexed the Assyrian provinces which had been founded in the territory of the kingdom of Israel: Samaria, Megiddo, and possibly also Gilead. This is confirmed by the fact that he fought at Megiddo" (p. 102).

"When Pharaoh Neco passed through Judah on his way to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish, Josiah marched out to meet him in battle. It is far from clear why he did so. Most likely is the suggestion that he wanted to assure Judah's independence among the nations. Had he permitted the Egyptians to pass through, he could have been considered to be a collaborator against Babylon" ("Josiah," Paul Gardner, editor, *The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*, 1995, p. 384). There is no doubt that Josiah would not have wanted anyone helping Assyria back into power. And it is possible that Judah still maintained a residual alliance with Babylon since the days of Hezekiah. Then again, perhaps Josiah simply did what any ruler would do when an uninvited foreign army comes marching through your land—put a stop to it to make sure your borders are respected.

"Neco was disturbed at Josiah's refusal [to back off]. He sent a message with a religious overtone. He argued that God had told him to move quickly, that Josiah's hostile acts were a threat to the accomplishment of God's will, and that God would punish him for it" (p. 384). Now God, it is true, did at times speak to pagan rulers about a course of action He wanted them to take (see [Genesis 20:6](#); [Genesis 41:25](#); [Daniel 2:28](#)). Yet ancient monarchs often made such claims falsely. And Josiah really had no reason to believe God had actually spoken to the Egyptian pharaoh.

He assumed it was a lie—as most of us probably would were we in his shoes.

So what did Josiah do wrong? He is often accused of "meddling in someone else's affairs." But it's not really someone else's affair when a foreign army is marching through your country and you're the king. Perhaps, then, the only obvious thing Josiah can be faulted for is a failure to ask God what to do. It would seem that he could have asked the priests to consult the Urim and Thummim. Or he could have sought out a prophet. However, it may be that this would have taken time Josiah did not think he could afford in the situation—though this would be improper reasoning since God's will is paramount. Perhaps Josiah assumed that it was always God's will for the king to defend the nation's borders. We just don't know. In any case, God *had* communicated a message to Necho or in some way impressed on his mind the need to act as he did (see [2 Chronicles 35:22](#)). And Josiah was mortally wounded.

But Josiah did not die on the battlefield. He died in Jerusalem and was buried there with full honors. Perhaps this was because God had promised, "Surely...I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace..." ([2 Kings 22:20](#)). And indeed, he died in peace though he had been wounded in battle.

With Josiah's resistance, Pharaoh Necho was sufficiently delayed so that Haran was lost to the Assyrians. This is rather interesting to contemplate. God had directed Necho to make haste. And if he had made it to Haran in time, the Assyrians would presumably have held out against the Babylonians. Yet was this truly God's will? More poignantly, did Josiah actually cause God's will to be thwarted? Certainly not! It makes far more sense to realize that it was actually God's intent that Necho *not* make it on time. Why then did He tell Necho to make haste? Perhaps it was to create the very situation that brought about the death of Josiah—and consequently placed Judah

under Egyptian rule (for Necho now ruled all the territory up to the Euphrates).

Consider what a righteous ruler Josiah was. And yet God allowed Him to be killed at the age of 39. In [Isaiah 57:1](#), God said: "The righteous perishes, and no man takes it to heart; merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Perhaps this, more than anything, is why Josiah died when he did. It was time for Judah to be punished—and Josiah had to be taken out of the way first. Rather than our being overly critical of a final mistake on his part, especially lacking information to properly judge exactly what happened, we would do better to focus on the tremendous, positive example of this great ruler, as Jeremiah did ([Jeremiah 22:15-16](#)). Indeed, Jeremiah led the nation in a lament—the words of which have not been preserved—over losing the most righteous king Judah ever had ([2 Chronicles 35:25](#); see [2 Kings 23:25](#)).

"The Wind Shall Eat Up All Your Rulers"

In the wake of Josiah's death, Josiah's son Jehoahaz was made king by "the people of the land" ([2 Chronicles 36:1](#)). This "was a technical term that referred to a body of leaders such as a council of elders or a kind of informal parliament (see [2 Chronicles 33:25](#)). This group acted in a time of crisis, such as the death of Josiah in battle [actually, *from* battle]. His loss was made worse by the fact that he had at least four sons who could succeed him. Josiah [probably not expecting to die for many years] may not have made his choice of successor clear" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 36:1).

"Jehoahaz (called Shallum in Jeremiah 22:11) was Josiah's third son (see [2 Kings] 24:18; 1 Chronicles 3:15). The name Jehoahaz means 'The Lord Has Grasped.' This is the same name as the king of Israel, the son of Jehu (10:35). Johanan, Josiah's first son, apparently had died and

Eliakim (or Jehoiakim), the second son, was bypassed. A fourth son, Mattaniah (or Zedekiah), would eventually ascend to the throne and rule as Judah's last king (598-586 b.c.)" (note on [2 Kings 23:31](#)). Sadly, the reforms of Josiah's magnificent reign didn't last. Jehoahaz turned out to be evil like Josiah's predecessors. But he only reigned three months.

"Jehoahaz's reign of three months came to an end with the return of Pharaoh Necho from Haran. Jehoahaz was summoned to Riblah, Necho's headquarters in Syria. Then he was led away to die in Egypt. His brother Eliakim was installed on the throne with his name changed to Jehoiakim. Judah thus became no more than a vassal of Egypt. The curse for Judah's disobedience was about to fall (see Deuteronomy 28:64-68)" (note on [2 Kings 23:31](#)). Necho, it appears, did not accept Judah's appointment of its own king. He wanted it made clear that no one would now reign in Judah except by *his* appointment. The change of Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim also demonstrated the pharaoh's overlordship. Regrettably, Jehoiakim, like his brother, did not follow in Josiah's ways but continued in the evil ways of most of Judah's rulers.

Jeremiah addresses these events and prophesies the outcome in most of [Jeremiah 22](#). In [2 Chronicles 35:25](#), the prophet leads the nation in a lament. Jewish custom, which derives from biblical times, is a week of intense grief as the first part of a month of official mourning (for close family members a lesser form of mourning might continue for a year). [Jeremiah 22:10](#) shows that more than three months have passed since Josiah's death. Jeremiah says to no longer weep for him—but to instead weep for his successor Shallum (Jehoahaz), who has been taken away to Egypt, never to return (verses 10-12).

Jeremiah then launches into a scathing prophecy against Jehoiakim, addressing him first in the third person (verses 13-14), then as "you" (verses 15-17) and finally by name (verse 18). Jeremiah's description

speaks for itself. Like so many people in power, Jehoiakim looked after his own interests at the expense of his subjects, building a great palace while extorting from his subjects to pay tribute to Egypt. This was in direct violation of God's law ([Leviticus 19:13](#)).

Jeremiah uses Jehoiakim's father Josiah as an example of true godly leadership—doing what is right and just, defending the cause of the poor and needy. He explains that this is what it means to really "know God" (see verse 16). Indeed, Josiah did this and lived well—without having to oppress people (verse 15). Having a huge mansion might look impressive, but it doesn't equate with godliness and true leadership. Jehoiakim suffered from a malady experienced by many people in power—covetousness (verse 17). And, as Jethro advised Moses more than 800 years earlier, covetous people make for poor leaders ([Exodus 18:21](#)). Indeed, this led to still worse sins.

The first part of [Jeremiah 22](#) appears to also relate to the reign of Jehoiakim, as there is no break between verses 9 and 10. It further illustrates the decline in justice and righteousness that followed Josiah's reign. God says to the king, "You are Gilead to Me, the head of Lebanon..." (verse 6). These places "were sources for timber for the royal palaces. These luxurious residences would be reduced to deserted wilderness and set ablaze if the kings disobeyed the covenant" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 6-7). And sadly Jehoiakim and the other kings following Josiah did just that. Verses 8-9 foretell the right conclusion other nations will eventually reach about Jerusalem's destruction, just as Moses had warned in [Deuteronomy 29:24-28](#).

Jeremiah also pronounces judgment on Jehoiakim personally. Some of this may have been added later, following Jehoiakim's attempt to destroy Jeremiah's recorded prophecies (see [Jeremiah 36:27-32](#), especially verse 32). There will be no national lament or proper burial for Jehoiakim ([Jeremiah 22:18-19](#); compare 36:30). The people of Judah will instead lament their worsening circumstances. God tells them to go

cry in Lebanon to the north, in Bashan to the northeast and in Abarim in the southeast ([Jeremiah 22:20](#))—perhaps indicating the length over which Josiah had extended his rule. The nation's "lovers" or allies will themselves be carried away when destruction comes and will thus provide no help (verses 20-22). That destruction, unstated here, will come from Babylon. (Babylon is mentioned in verse 25, but that part of chapter 22 is beyond our current reading, as it was evidently given later, during the reign of Jehoiakim's son Jeconiah.) In verse 23, the "inhabitants of Lebanon, making your nest in the cedars," apparently refers not to Lebanon of the north but, as verses 6-7 indicate, to Jerusalem, "(Isaiah 37:24; Jeremiah 22:23; Ezekiel 17:3, 12; for Lebanon's cedars were used in building the temple and houses of Jerusalem; and its beauty made it a fit type of the metropolis)" (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary*, note on [Habakkuk 2:17](#)). The national armory from Solomon's time was actually called "the House of the Forest of Lebanon" (see [1 Kings 7:2](#); [1 Kings 10:16-17](#); [Isaiah 22:8](#)). And the wealthy of Judah built cedar mansions aloof from the common people to ensure protection (compare [Habakkuk 2:9](#)). Yet no reliance on the temple, palace, armory or rich neighborhoods would save the people of Judah from what was coming. The winds of adversity and invasion would eat up their rulers and bring them to shame for their wickedness ([Jeremiah 22:22](#)).

Historian Walter Kaiser Jr. sums up this period of Judah's history: "The drama of the final years of Judah and the Davidic line of kings involved the three major international powers of the day: Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Of course, there were minor roles given to the Cimmerians, the Scythians, Medes, and other people groups who longed to fill the vacuum as Assyria began to show signs of weakening. Three of the final four decades of the seventh century (640-609 B.C.) provided a glimmer of hope and the prospect of revival of a restored and even a reunited nation as a result of Josiah's reform in 621 B.C. Alas, however, the maelstrom of international unrest proved too much for the last five

Davidic kings of Judah in the last decade of the seventh century and the first decade and a half of the sixth century (600-587 B.C.). Two of the last five Davidic kings met their deaths as a direct result of involvement in these international struggles, while the other three died in exile" (*A History of Israel*, 1998, p. 386)." [END]

Day 576 – MONDAY: January 20th

Jeremiah 48

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Recall from the previous reading that when Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar sent Chaldean troops and mercenary forces from Syria, Moab and Ammon into Judah. This was actually according to *God's* will, to punish Jehoiakim and Judah for their rebellion against *Him* ([2 Kings 24:1-5](#)). But these nations, though guilty of their own great sins, exulted in their part in Judah's downfall—full of arrogance and pride. They did not acknowledge God. And their *hatred* of God's people was completely unjustified. So they, too, would be punished. Jeremiah prophesies against them in [Jeremiah 48](#) and 49—and against Israel's age-old enemy, Edom, along with other adjacent peoples. This parallels end-time events, when God punishes modern Israel and Judah through other nations—nations that God then punishes as well for their own pride, arrogance and wrongdoing.

The Moabites and Ammonites are descendants of Lot's sons, Moab and Ben-Ammi ([Genesis 19:36-38](#)). These peoples, along with the Edomites, lived on the east side of the Jordan River and Dead Sea, where the nation of Jordan is now situated—Ammon on the north, Moab in the middle and Edom in the south. The hammer of Babylon would fall on them too—not just Judah (see [Jeremiah 27:1-11](#)). But while the prophecies in chapters 48 and 49 probably applied to the people of Jeremiah's day in part, it is evident that their ultimate application was for the end time—the Day of the Lord, the cataclysmic period

immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ, which appears to be a year in length. Note [Jeremiah 48:12](#) ("behold, the days are coming"), verse 41 ("on that day"), verse 44 ("the year of their punishment") and verse 47 ("in the latter days"). And we will see further proof as we examine the chapter.

As has been mentioned previously in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary, the descendants of the people of ancient Ammon and Moab are evidently still concentrated in Jordan (with its capital named Amman after Ammon) and surrounding areas. Today's Palestinians of Jordan and Israel are probably a mixture of Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Arabs and other ancient Middle Eastern elements. In reading [Jeremiah 48](#) and 49, consider the attitudes of these people today toward the Jewish state of Israel. As the old saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Some of the wording in [Jeremiah 48](#) is quite similar to that of the prophecy against Moab in [Isaiah 15-16](#). Indeed, Jeremiah appears to have been led by God to actually use portions of Isaiah's prophecy himself. (That being so, you will probably find it helpful to reread [Isaiah 15-16](#) at this point and [review the Beyond Today Bible Commentary for those chapters](#).)

Let's look at some of the specifics of the prophecy in [Jeremiah 48](#). Nebo (verse 1) was a town of Moab located at Mount Nebo, from where Moses surveyed the Promised Land. Kirjathaim (verse 1) and Heshbon (verse 2) were Moabite cities—Heshbon being the chief one. "Heshbon was midway between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok; it was the residence of Sihon, king of the Amorites [in Moses' day], and afterwards a Levitical city in Gad ([Num. 21:26](#))" (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary*, note on verse [Jeremiah 48:2](#)). Of course, Gad and the other Israelite tribes east of the Jordan had been carried away captive by the Assyrians and this territory reverted back to the Moabites (and even before that the land had changed hands numerous times because

of frequent wars). It is interesting to notice that many of the Ammonite and Moabite cities were built by the Israelites: "And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, Atroth and Shophan and Jazer and Jogbehan, Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, Nebo and Baal Meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah" ([Numbers 32:34-38](#)).

Madmen ([Jeremiah 48:2](#)) was another town in Moab, its name meaning "Dunghill." Horonaim (verse 3), meaning "Two Caves," was located in a "descent" or low place—in contrast to the "ascent of Luhith" (verse 5). "Horonaim lay in a plain, Luhith on a height. To the latter, therefore, the Moabites would flee with 'continual weeping,' as a place of safety from the Chaldeans" (note on verse 5).

Chemosh, the tutelary god of the Moabites, was to go into captivity—apparently signifying that the idols representing him would be plundered by the enemy or would simply accompany the people into captivity, as with the priests and princes (verse 7). However, there may be an end-time application here. Consider that the world religion known today as Christianity is actually a false Christianity that is in many ways a modern form of Baal worship—and that Baal and Chemosh are often identified as one and the same. In many ways, Islam—the religion of today's Moabites and virtually all Middle Eastern peoples other than the Jews—arose out of a blend of Judaism and this false Christianity mixed with Arab mythology. In spite of the fact that there are numerous sects within these three major religions, which provide hundreds of minor variations in practices, their roots are remarkably similar to each other, as well as to the ancient Canaanite and Babylonian religions.

Verse 9 in the New King James Version says, "Give wings to Moab, that she may flee and get away; for her cities shall be desolate, without any to dwell in them" (compare KJV). If the translation of the first part of

this verse is accurate, the prophecy itself would seem to be the wings of escape—if the Moabites would heed it. However, other versions translate the verse differently. For example: "Oh, for wings for Moab that she could fly away [implying that she can't], for her cities shall be left without a living soul" (Living Bible). Still other translations are even more different: "Put salt on Moab, for she will be laid waste; her towns will become desolate, with no one to live in them" (NIV, compare NRSV). This seems to make the most sense, considering that God appears to be speaking to the forces of Moab's destruction in verses 9-10.

Verse 10 is apparently mistranslated in the King James and New King James Versions. In context, the word rendered "deceitfully" actually has to do with being slack or negligent. "To represent how entirely this is God's will, a curse is pronounced on the Chaldeans, the instrument, if they do it *negligently* (Margin) or by halves" (note on verse 10). Notice the NIV rendering: "A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work! A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!" (compare NRSV, which translates the verse similarly).

Verse 11 declares that Moab is "settled on his dregs" (or "lees" in the King James Version), not having been "emptied from vessel to vessel." The *JFB Commentary* states: "As wine left to settle on its own lees retains its flavor and strength (which it would lose by being poured from one vessel into another), so Moab, owing to its never having been dislodged from its settlements, retains its pride of strength unimpaired" (note on verse 11). But this was going to change (verse 12). "The image was clear to Jeremiah's first readers. Wine was poured gently from the storage jar to serving jars so as not to disturb the dregs, impurities which had settled at the bottom. Similarly, God had treated Moab gently. But now the nation's experience will be like that of jars violently shaken and smashed" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on verse 11).

Dibon (verse 18) was the Moabite capital from which King Mesha had ruled ([2 Kings 3:4-27](#)). It is clear that all of Moab's strongholds are being destroyed—utterly humiliating this haughty people.

In verse 19 of [Jeremiah 48](#), Aroer, "on the north bank of the Arnon [the river between Moab and Ammon], [is] a city of Ammon (Deuteronomy 2:36; [Deuteronomy 3:12](#)). As it was on 'the way' of the Moabites who fled into the desert, its inhabitants 'ask' what is the occasion of Moab's flight, and so learn the lot that awaits themselves" (*JFB*, note on [Jeremiah 48:19](#)). Indeed, Ammon was next on the list for destruction, as chapter 49 shows.

Verses 20-25 of [Jeremiah 48](#) give the answer to the question of what happened in verse 19—and that answer is from God (verse 25). Judgment is to come on the countryside (verse 21) and on "all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near" (verse 24). "He enumerates the Moabite cities at length.... Many of them were assigned to the Levites, while Israel stood" (note on verse 20). Bozrah in verse 24 "refers not to the capital of Edom, but to Bezer, one of the cities of refuge (see [Josh. 20:8](#))" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on [Jeremiah 48:21-25](#)). "The piling up of name after name is designed to drive home the message of total judgment" (*New Bible Commentary*, note on verses 21-24). The "horn" and "arm" of Moab—symbols of power and strength—are to be broken.

The Moabites are to be made "drunk"—that is, "intoxicated with the cup of divine wrath, so as to be in helpless distraction" (*JFB*, note on verse 26). They are to be objects of scorn, just as they scorned the Israelites. God asks Moab, "Was she [Israel] caught among thieves, that you shake your head in scorn whenever you speak of her?" (verse 27, NIV). This is "proverbial. What did Israel do to deserve such derision? Was he detected in theft, that thou didst so exult over him in speaking of him? Though guilty before God, Israel was guiltless toward thee" (note on verse 27). No doubt, the Palestinians of today would

disagree—wrongly. Of course, it should be understood that the retribution on Moab is not mere "payback" for mistreating God's favored nation, but rather God's fair and equal treatment of all nations. No peoples will remain stiff-necked or arrogant before Him when He intervenes to judge the nations.

Verse 28 is a directive for those who "dwell in Moab" to leave the cities and dwell in "the rock." Is this referring only to Moabites, or is it referring to non-Moabites in the region, possibly some of God's people in the end time? Perhaps it refers to both—the directive being aimed at whoever will respond. The mention of "rock," or *sela* in Hebrew, is no surprise since the nation of Jordan is certainly rocky terrain. And in the southern part of Jordan, in the area once occupied by Edomites, is the ancient abandoned *city* of Sela. Its Greek name Petra, by which it is still known, means the same thing—"Rock"—since dwellings, tombs and temples were carved out of the rock cliffs. Some have speculated, based on an interpretation of certain scriptures, about the possibility of Petra being the place of safety in the end time prophesied in [Revelation 12:6](#). Yet at this time we can't know for sure. Some possible interpretations and scenarios were covered in the commentary with [Isaiah 16](#), where it appears to say that Moab will refuse to give refuge to God's outcasts (though, as noted before, the wording there is somewhat ambiguous). In any case, God will undoubtedly show those of His people whom He intends to protect in the end time the way to safety at the right time.

The downside of even mentioning a place of future temporary refuge is that God's people can be tempted to trust in getting to the *place*. The trust should only be in *God*, who, by His supernatural protection and provision, makes one place safer than others for a particular period of time. And a Christian's focus should not be on physically saving his own neck, but on doing the work of God—"for in doing *this* you will

[spiritually] save both yourself and those who hear you" ([1 Timothy 4:11-16](#); compare [Matthew 16:24-27](#)).

Returning to [Jeremiah 48](#), we see the pride of Moab addressed in strong terms in verse 29—six times in this one verse. In verse 30, God speaks of Moab's unjust wrath—and even lies. Therefore punishment must come. But this is no pleasure for God—He mourns over having to take such action (verse 31).

Kir Heres, "also called Kir Haraseth, (see 2 Kings 3:25; Isaiah 16:11), may be a name for the capital city of Moab (Kir of Moab; see Isaiah 15:1)" (note on [Jeremiah 48:30-33](#)). Sibmah and Jazer (verse 32) are other Moabite cities built by the Israelites, as mentioned earlier. Verse 32 has been translated and interpreted in various ways, some seeing Jazer as a literal sea, perhaps the Dead Sea or Mediterranean, and some seeing it as a figurative sea of tears formed from the great weeping mentioned.

The cry from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz ([Jeremiah 48:34](#)) is mentioned in [Isaiah 15:4](#). The three-year-old heifer is mentioned in verse 5 (see Beyond Today Bible Commentary on [Isaiah 14:28-16:14](#)). "My heart shall wail like flutes for Moab...for the men of Kir Heres" ([Jeremiah 48:35](#)) parallels "my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab...for Kir Heres" ([Isaiah 16:11](#)).

In [Jeremiah 48:40](#) we see one flying like an eagle to overspread Moab—"not to bear them 'on eagles' wings" (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11-12), as God does His people, but to pounce on them as a prey ([Jeremiah] 49:22; Deuteronomy 28:49; Habakkuk 1:8)" (note on [Jeremiah 48:40](#)).

Verse 44 mentions "the year of their punishment." Considering the related punishments of Ammon, Moab and Edom, this seems to tie very clearly to "the day of the LORD's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion" ([Isaiah 34:8](#); compare [Isaiah 63:4](#)). As already

mentioned, this year of punishment is a reference to the end-time Day of the Lord, which culminates in the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

"In the shadow of Heshbon, the [Moabite] fugitives stand helpless" ([Jeremiah 48:45, NIV](#)). Indeed, it is all to no avail. The land will be devoured by fire. Again, while this may have had some application to the ancient Babylonian invasion, it is primarily speaking of the end time. Yet it should be noted that the end-time invader of Moab is not the final Babylon—for Ammon, Moab and Edom will escape from the hands of that imperialistic power (see [Daniel 11:41](#)).

Rather, the eagle who will pounce on Moab and destroy it is the returning Jesus Christ and a resurgent Israel. The "fire out of Heshbon" and "flame from the midst of Sihon" ([Jeremiah 48:45](#)) is a quote from [Numbers 21:28](#) concerning the ancient Israelite destruction of Moab. Verse 46 of [Jeremiah 48](#) is quoted from [Numbers 21:29](#), regarding Israel's ancient subjugation of Moab. Yet in Jeremiah these things are prophesied to happen in the future (compare also [Isaiah 11:11-14](#)). Making it even clearer, the devouring of the "brow of Moab, the crown of the head of the sons of tumult" (verse 45) is essentially quoted from the messianic prophecy God gave through Balaam: "A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult" ([Numbers 24:17](#)). This unmistakably refers to the coming of the Messiah in mighty power—and provides a clear marker that these prophecies extend to the time of Christ's return.

But that is not the ultimate end for Moab. While there is a seeming contradiction between verse 42 and verse 47, it is easily resolved. "Moab shall be destroyed as a people" (verse 42), "yet I [God] will bring back the captives of Moab in the latter days" (verse 47). Verse 42 must mean "a people" as a whole—a nation—and not every last person. Otherwise there would be no one to take into captivity (see verse 46). It is thus evident that when Moab is destroyed, there will be some

survivors. This is consistent with what we have sometimes witnessed in modern warfare. Even in the horrific "ethnic cleansing" wars of late, some people survive.

Besides [Isaiah 15-16](#), other prophecies concerning Moab may be found in [Amos 2:1-3](#), [Zephaniah 2:8-11](#), [Isaiah 25:10-12](#) and [Ezekiel 25:8-11](#).”
[END]

Day 577 – TUESDAY: January 21st

Jeremiah 26

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “The incidents described in this chapter take place at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign—thus around 608 B.C. Some commentators believe this chapter is parallel with chapter 7 because in both places God has Jeremiah proclaim at the temple the object lesson of Shiloh. If they are the same incident, then chapters 7 through 10 should fall here in time order. And that may be. However, the wording of chapter 7 could imply that Josiah had not yet destroyed Tophet, the place of child sacrifice, which would lend support to the chronological arrangement followed in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary. Jeremiah, therefore, may be essentially repeating a proclamation he gave more than 13 years earlier (as he likewise later repeats some of the statements concerning Tophet in chapter 19).

The reference to "all the cities of Judah" coming to worship ([Jeremiah 26:2](#)) indicates that this was most likely one of the nation's annual festivals. The essence of Jeremiah's address to the people was that Judah needed to repent or Jerusalem would suffer the same fate as Shiloh. As explained in the highlights for [Jeremiah 7](#), even though Shiloh had been the resting place of the tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, God had allowed it to be destroyed. The people were at this time still placing too much trust in the temple and Jerusalem and their forms of

worship. God, they reasoned, would never allow His holy temple and city to be destroyed. But they were wrong.

Verse 3 of chapter 26 highlights an important principle found throughout Scripture. Even though God threatens dire consequences, He is prepared to relent if the people respond and turn from their evil ways (see [Jeremiah 18:7-8](#); [1 Kings 21:29](#); [Joel 2:13](#); [Jonah 3:10](#)). If they don't, the punishment would fall. Jerusalem would be made a "curse to all nations"—that is, destroyed to provide an example to all nations ([Jeremiah 26:6](#)).

The religious leaders then stirred up the assembled worshipers against Jeremiah. They basically arrested him, telling him he would receive the death penalty for what they saw as his blasphemy in saying God's temple would be destroyed. Jesus would later suffer similar reaction from religious leaders over the many proclamations He made that they perceived as a threat to their continuing power, including His declaration that the temple would be destroyed (see [Luke 21:5-6](#); [Luke 22:2](#)).

In Jeremiah's case, a hearing was convened before "all the princes and all the people" ([Jeremiah 26:11-12](#)), which may have denoted a bicameral national council or high court. The "princes" here didn't necessarily belong to the royal family, even though they came from the king's house. The Hebrew word from which the word "princes" is translated "may denote leaders, chieftains.... [The word] also appears frequently as a word representing royal rulers and officials, no doubt of sundry ranks and titles.... Thus Jer[emiah] 26:11 speaks of the princes of Judah, and the context (vv. 10-16) depicts them as occupying the 'king's house,' to possessing judicial power, ordering Jeremiah to die or to be spared" (Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 884). Verse 17 says that certain "elders of the land" addressed the "assembly of the people." Perhaps these elders

were members of this assembly, serving as clan or town representatives.

"Jeremiah gave a threefold defense on his own behalf. First, he announced that the Lord had sent him to deliver the message they had heard. He was not a false prophet. Second, he announced that his message was conditional. If the people would reform their ways (cf. 3:12; 7:3) God promised not to bring about the disaster. Thus Jeremiah's message did offer some hope for the city. Third, Jeremiah warned that if they put him to death they would bring the guilt of innocent blood on themselves. They would be guilty in God's sight of murdering an innocent man" (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, note on [Jeremiah 26:12-17](#)).

While this may have caused some of them a measure of concern, the reaction of the officials in verse 16 is based more on legal technicality than on any belief in what Jeremiah was saying. A prophet could not be put to death unless he spoke in the name of another god or his prophecy turned out to be false. The latter could not as yet be determined. And the former had not been committed, as Jeremiah had spoken in the name of the true God of Israel. So Jeremiah seemed to be off the hook. But what really tipped the scales in his favor was the citing of a precedent by certain elders in verse 17—that of Micah's proclamation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple given more than 90 years earlier, in which King Hezekiah, the supreme judge of the time, did not have Micah executed. "This is really a fine defense, and the argument was perfectly conclusive. Some think that it was Ahikam [mentioned in verse 24] who undertook the prophet's defense" (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, note on verse 17).

The chapter ends with a brief story of another prophet of God named Urijah (or Uriah), mentioned only here in Scripture. Jehoiakim had sought to put him to death, so he fled to Egypt. But being a vassal of Egypt at this time, Judah had extradition rights and Urijah was brought

home to his execution. This episode may have been inserted here to show that even though Jeremiah's case seemed pretty ironclad, the state still posed a danger—as a corrupt king such as Jehoiakim could quite easily see to it that a prophet was executed. In any event, Jeremiah was saved with the help of Ahikam, which may refer to the preceding court defense or perhaps the prophet actually taking refuge with him.

Interestingly, Ahikam was the son of Shaphan, who had served under faithful King Josiah. "The family of Shaphan played an important part in the final years of Judah.... Shaphan was King Josiah's secretary who reported the finding of the Law to Josiah ([2 Kings 22:3-13](#)). Shaphan had at least four sons—three of whom were mentioned in a positive way by Jeremiah (Ahikam, Gemariah, and Elashah). The fourth son, Jaazaniah, was the 'black sheep' of the family; his presence among the idol-worshippers in the temple caught Ezekiel by surprise (Ezekiel 8:11). Ahikam's son, Gedaliah, was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 b.c." (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, note on verse 24)." [END]

Day 578 – WEDNESDAY: January 22nd

Jeremiah 25

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "This chapter of Jeremiah was written either just before or just after Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah—following the battle of Carchemish—and made Jehoiakim swear allegiance to him. Since mention is made of the "first year of Nebuchadnezzar," it seems most likely to refer to the period following his accession to the throne of Babylon in September of 605 B.C.—which occurred just after the invasion of Judah. If so, then Nebuchadnezzar basically came and went. It does not appear that he wrought any real damage on Judah at this time. Most likely, with Egypt in retreat,

Jehoiakim switched allegiances rather quickly—giving up the temple treasures and prisoners mentioned in [Daniel 1](#) without any resistance.

Yet Jeremiah views what has transpired as a turning point—the beginning of the fulfillment of what he has proclaimed at God's behest for 23 years, in conjunction with other prophets, since the beginning of his ministry (see [Jeremiah 25:3](#)). At that earlier time, he had proclaimed that destruction would come on Judah from "the north...all the families of the north" ([Jeremiah 1:14-15](#)). Now, he makes it clear that this refers to the Babylonian forces under Nebuchadnezzar ([Jeremiah 25:8-9](#)).

Verses 11-14, relating to the "seventy years," have been a source of confusion to many. It seems to say that Babylon would fall in 70 years, and that this would be the same period as Judah's desolation. Jeremiah later writes to captives, telling them that God would cause them to return to the Promised Land "after seventy years are completed at Babylon" ([Jeremiah 29:10](#)). According to [2 Chronicles 36:20-23](#), the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. began the 70 years of desolation in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. Daniel and Zechariah apparently understood it this way too ([Daniel 9:2](#); [Zechariah 1:12](#)).

So where is the difficulty? Jeremiah gave his prophecy around the time that the initial deportation of Jews (such as Daniel) occurred, in 605 B.C. But ancient Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia in 539 B.C., just 66 years later. And in that first year of Cyrus, he issues a decree allowing the Jews to return to the Promised Land—again in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy ([Ezra 1:1](#)). Nothing significant appears to have happened in 535 B.C., 70 years after Jeremiah gave this prophecy. Furthermore, it seems strange that punishment was supposedly to come on Babylon in 535 B.C. when the Babylonian Empire ended four years earlier, in 539 B.C.

How, then, do we resolve this? We must realize that Jeremiah was foretelling two distinct things, each lasting 70 years *but not necessarily*

the same 70 years. They are linked together because the accomplishment of the one is necessary for the fulfillment of the other. [Jeremiah 25:11](#) mentions: 1) the desolation of Judah; and 2) the duration of the Babylonian Empire. Verses 8-10 describe the first element. Verse 11 is the transitional verse, which includes both elements. And verses 12-14 amplify the second element, explaining that Babylon will be destroyed at the end of its imperial reign.

How long did the Babylonian Empire last? While the last pockets of Assyrian resistance were eliminated in the 605 B.C. Battle of Carchemish, the Assyrian Empire really came to an end with the fall of Haran to Babylonian-led forces in 609 B.C. (this was the defeat of the army that had fled Nineveh at its fall three years earlier in 612 B.C.). Starting in 609 B.C., Babylon turned from battling the Assyrians themselves to subduing all the former Assyrian territories, beginning with the land of Armenia. Thus, the Babylonian Empire began in 609 B.C. It then lasted 70 years, until the conquest of Cyrus in 539 B.C. So this 70-year period had already begun when Jeremiah prophesied. Notice that he didn't say otherwise.

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple of God, and took the bulk of the population captive in 586 B.C. This accomplished its desolation, which Jeremiah foretold. As mentioned, the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 B.C. enabled the return of the Jews to the Promised Land. But the repopulation of the land took place over time. It is significant to note that 70 years from 586 B.C. brings us to 516 B.C., the time the temple reconstruction begun under Zerubbabel was completed. The mirth and gladness of verse 10—repeated from [Jeremiah 7:34](#) and [Jeremiah 16:9](#)—found greatest expression during the annual festivals, which were observed in the presence of the temple. Thus, the restoration of the temple brought an end to the 70-year desolation Jeremiah prophesied. (See also [Jeremiah 33:10-11](#), where the return of the voice of joy and gladness, and of bride and

bridegroom, is associated with bringing "the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD.")

Judgment on the Nations

Moving on in chapter 25, notice the reference in verse 13 to prophecies against the nations recorded in the book of Jeremiah. It may simply refer to what follows beginning in verse 15. But it could also refer to chapters 46-51. *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary* notes regarding [Jeremiah 25:13](#): "It follows from this, that the prophecies against foreign nations (chs. 46-51) must have been already written. Hence LXX [the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures] inserts here those prophecies. But if they had followed immediately (vs. 13), there would have been no propriety in the observation in the verse. The very wording of the reference shows that they existed in some other part of the book, and not in the immediate context. It was in this very year, the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36:1-2), that Jeremiah was directed to write in a regular *book* for the first time all that he had prophesied against Judah and *foreign 'nations'* from the beginning of his ministry. Probably, at a subsequent time, when he completed the whole work, including chs. 46-51, Jeremiah himself inserted the clause, 'all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.' The prophecies in question may have been repeated, as others in Jeremiah, more than once; so in the original smaller collection they may have stood in an earlier position; and in the fuller subsequent collection, in their later and present position."

Starting in [Jeremiah 25:15](#) and continuing to the end of the chapter, God pronounces judgment on the nations. Notice that He begins with Jerusalem and Judah—"put first: for 'judgment begins at the house of God'; they being most guilty whose religious privileges are greatest ([1 Peter 4:17](#) [compare [Ezekiel 9:6](#)])" (*JFB Commentary*, note on [Jeremiah](#)

[25:18](#)). Yet in fairness, judgment is brought on all nations (see especially verse 29).

In verse 26, the name *Sheshach* refers to Babylon (see [Jeremiah 51:41](#)). Various explanations have been given for it. One is that it was written according to a code wherein the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is expressed by the last, etc., so that the word Sheshach would exactly correspond to Babel. However, it seems unnecessary to conceal the word Babel here since the word Babylon is given in close context in both places. Others translate the word as meaning "Bronze-Gated" or "House of a Prince." And there are still other explanations (see *JFB*, note on 25:26; Alfred Jones, "Sheshach," *Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names*, 1997). Perhaps the most likely meaning is "thy fine linen" (*The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon*, Strong No. 8347, on-line at [bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/ Hebrew](http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Hebrew)). This would seem to tie in with the description of end-time Babylon in [Revelation 18:16](#): "that great city that was *clothed in fine linen*, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls."

The prophecy of judgment on the nations in [Jeremiah 25](#) applied in part to what happened in ancient times. All of those mentioned in verses 17-25 fell to Babylon. Then, as in verse 26, Babylon fell after them. But this scenario will be repeated in the last days. Indeed, it is clear from verses 31-33 that a final fulfillment of this prophecy will come in the end time, when a large percentage of mankind will be destroyed during the Day of the Lord (compare [Isaiah 66:16](#)).” [END]

Day 579 – THURSDAY: January 23rd

Jeremiah 36 & Jeremiah 45

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “At the start of the current reading, it is still the fourth year of Jehoiakim—March-April 605 B.C. to March-April 604 B.C. The Battle of Carchemish happened in the late spring of 605.

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah sometime during the summer, carrying away a number of Jews, including Daniel and his friends. Jehoiakim had become a Babylonian vassal. And Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon in August to assume the imperial throne, which he did on September 7. Since the events in the past several readings occurred following Nebuchadnezzar's invasion but apparently prior to the events described in the current reading, it appears likely that the events of the current reading begin in the early part of 604 B.C.

Jeremiah is told to write everything he has prophesied from the beginning of his ministry in Josiah's day up till now in a book or scroll ([Jeremiah 36:2](#)). "Scrolls (Heb[rew] *megilla*; G[ree]k *biblion*) were made by gluing together, side by side, separate strips of papyrus, leather, parchment or vellum and then winding the long strip around a pole, which would often have handles at both ends to facilitate transporting and reading the scroll. Papyrus, or specifically the pith of the papyrus reed, had been used as a writing surface since the early 3rd millennium b.c.e. [B.C.] It was probably a papyrus scroll, written by Baruch while Jeremiah dictated, that King Jehoiakim ordered burned (Jeremiah 36)" (*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 2000, p. 1174).

The writing down of everything at this point does not mean that Jeremiah had written nothing before. Perhaps he had written many things and now dictated them into a single document—though God could have enabled him to reconstruct all he had said from memory. Jeremiah does not now personally write but instead dictates everything to Baruch the son of Neriah, a trained scribe.

While many people doubt the authenticity of the Bible, "through a most amazing combination of circumstances, it would appear that we now have two extraordinary reminders of reliability of the witness to Baruch's presence in the time of Jeremiah.... One particular *bullā* [a lump of clay impressed with a seal]...bears the same name as the scribe in the book of Jeremiah. In three lines of ancient Hebrew text, writing in

the formal cursive style of the seventh century B.C., the seal reads, 'belonging to Berekhyahu, son of Neriyaahu, the scribe.' Berekhyahu is almost certainly the complete name of the shortened form Baruch, which means 'Blessed of Yahweh.' Baruch's father, likewise, in its full form is also Neriyaahu, called Neriah in the Bible. The suffix *-yahu* is a shortened form of Yahweh...

"Now a second bulla has shown up.... The same seal that impressed the *bulla* just described as belonging to Baruch was used on this one, for the three registers of writing are identical.... On the back of this *bulla* are impressions of the papyrus fibers from the document to which it was once tied. What is remarkable about this second *bulla* is that the edge is embossed with a fingerprint on the edge, which is presumably that of Baruch the scribe himself. Baruch must have written and sealed the document to which it was attached" (Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents; Are They Reliable and Relevant?*, 2001, pp. 158-159).

Not only does Jeremiah have Baruch write down all his words, but he informs the scribe that, because he is "confined" (verse 6)—either physically restrained as in the previous reading or, more likely as he is able to hide later, merely barred from entering the temple—Baruch must go into the temple on the next fast day and read the words.

This is a difficult assignment, considering the punishment previously heaped on Jeremiah. Turning to chapter 45, we find it one of the shortest in the Bible. But it has a vitally important message. We can all find ourselves like Baruch, sympathizing with his comment: "I am overwhelmed with trouble! Haven't I had enough pain already? And now the LORD has added more! I am weary of my own sighing and can find no rest" (verse 3, New Living Translation). "Baruch came from a family of achievers. His grandfather was governor of Jerusalem in Josiah's time (2 Chronicles 34:8) and his brother [would later be] the staff officer in Zedekiah's court (Jeremiah 51:59) [and was likely already

involved in government]. He [Baruch] had expected to receive some high office, but found himself the secretary of the most hated man in Judah! God told Baruch what He tells us. Be the best you can be, but don't expect to be more than you are ([\[Jeremiah 45\]](#) v. 5). Self-seeking ambition was hardly appropriate when the nation was facing divine judgment—or at any other time" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 1-5). Furthermore, although he couldn't see it at the time, God was with him and would protect him wherever he went (compare [Matthew 6:8](#), [Matthew 6:25-32](#); [Hebrews 13:5](#); [Joshua 1:5](#); [Deuteronomy 31:6](#); [Philippians 4:11](#)).

A Failed Attempt to Destroy God's Word

Baruch has to wait several months before carrying out his assigned duty but the fast day finally comes. Surprisingly, it is not God's commanded fast day, the Day of Atonement in the seventh month. Apparently the people had already forsaken this command since Josiah's death, which was only five years earlier. The fast mentioned in [Jeremiah 36](#) occurs in the ninth month of Jehoiakim's fifth year—November-December 604 B.C. (verse 9). There was no traditional fast at this time that we know of, but there is a historical context to perhaps explain the fast. In "604, Nebuchadnezzar was back again in the Hatti-territory to receive tribute from all its kings. This no doubt included Jehoiakim. At that time the march went as far south as [the Philistine city of] Askelon, which was captured in the month Kislev [the Hebrew ninth month]" (Edwin Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 1983, p. 186). The fast was probably called by the elders or priests at the urging of the people, who may have had some fears regarding Nebuchadnezzar's approach. The king, Jehoiakim, seems to have had no such fears. He was evidently secure in his position as a vassal to Babylon. In any case, with Nebuchadnezzar close at hand and the people perhaps somewhat softened by their fasting, it was a fit time to pronounce destruction on Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon.

Baruch reads aloud from the chamber of Gemariah. "Gemariah was the son of Shaphan, the scribe who read the scroll found during Josiah's reign (see [2 Kings 22:1-20](#)). It seems Gemariah was sympathetic toward Jeremiah, allowing the use of the room in the upper court, a room overlooking the temple courts" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on [Jeremiah 36:9-10](#)). Gemariah's son Michaiah reports the gist of what Baruch was proclaiming to his father and the other national leaders at the palace (verses 11-13). Elnathan, mentioned here, was the one who, on orders from Jehoiakim, brought the prophet Urijah back from Egypt to suffer execution (see [Jeremiah 26:22-23](#)). He is probably the same Elnathan named in [2 Kings 24:8](#) as the father of Nehushta, Jehoiachin's mother and therefore Jehoiakim's wife—thus making him Jehoiakim's father-in-law. Elnathan's father Achbor "also played a role in the reading of the scroll in the days of Josiah's reform. The parallels between Josiah's reform and Jeremiah's desire for national revival were included by Baruch deliberately, to remind the people of the earlier event" (note on [Jeremiah 36:11-13](#)).

The leaders send for Baruch to read the scroll to them. When he does, they become alarmed and decide that the king must be informed (verse 16). But, apparently fearing what Jehoiakim's reaction might be, they tell Baruch and Jeremiah to go hide out somewhere (verse 19). Perhaps some of them actually had a change of heart—though it may have been just momentary fearfulness. We do see Elnathan beseeching the king not to destroy the scroll (verse 25).

Outrageously, however, the king does destroy it—brazenly and contemptuously. Jehoiakim would have a few columns of the scroll read, whereupon he would cut that part out and cast it into the fire in the hearth before him. This is repeated until the entire scroll is read and burned (verse 23). The king and his servants show no fear at all (verse 24). It is not clear whether his servants here include all the leaders who had previously heard the scroll's contents. It may be that

they did not all go to the king but sent just a few representatives, such as Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah, who did implore the king to not burn the scroll.

In verse 26, Jehoiakim sends men out to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. Concerning Jerahmeel, the phrase "the king's son" should probably instead be "the son of Hamelech," as in the King James Version, since Jehoiakim had no grown sons at this time—his heir Jehoiachin being a 12-year-old boy. (It is also possible that "king's son" was the title of a particular office.) Thankfully, God protected His servants from being arrested and probably murdered.

How utterly horrible all of this was. God was giving a last chance for repentance—a possibility for reform as in the days of Josiah, Jehoiakim's father, who had responded positively to Jeremiah's pronouncements and to finding the Word of God. But no, this king of Judah will not repent. Instead, he burns the words of God and seeks to kill God's messengers. His actions are outrageous beyond description.

Jeremiah pronounces judgment on the king for his vile effrontery and blasphemy. He would die in disgrace. His lineage would not continue on David's throne, as his son Jehoiachin would reign for just three months. And Jerusalem would be destroyed. The Word of God, on the other hand, which Jehoiakim had tried to destroy, would endure. God had Jeremiah and Baruch rewrite everything, with even more added to it. And we have it today, before our very eyes. As Isaiah had proclaimed under divine inspiration, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" ([Isaiah 40:8](#))." [END]

Day 580 – FRIDAY: January 24th

Jeremiah 46, Jeremiah 47, 2 Kings 24:1-7 & 2 Chronicles 36:6-8

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Jeremiah 46:1 introduces a section of prophecies against other nations ([Jeremiah 46-51](#)), starting with Egypt. Though grouped together, these various prophecies were actually delivered at different times, as some of them are clearly dated. [Jeremiah 46](#) contains two prophecies against Egypt, but we are reading only the first one, relating to the battle of Carchemish. (The second prophecy appears to have been given in a later context.)

Recall that in 609 B.C., just after the death of Josiah, Babylonian-led forces under King Nabopolassar "repelled the Assyrians and their Egyptian allies [under Pharaoh Necho] who attempted to recapture Haran, and drove them west across the Euphrates River. For the next three years the Babylonians were preoccupied with the task of dealing with Urartu [Armenia] in order to open trade routes and secure the northern frontiers. [It was during this time that Syria and Judah became Egyptian-controlled territories, Jehoiakim of Judah serving as a vassal king under Necho.] At last Nabopolassar turned to the only remaining Assyrian stronghold, Carchemish, and in 605 defeated Assyria once and for all and forced Egypt to withdraw from north Syria. This major blow at Carchemish was struck not by Nabopolassar personally, but by his young son and commander in chief, Nebuchadnezzar [who would very shortly become king of Babylon]. Not satisfied with the defeat of Neco and his Egyptian hosts, the energetic prince pursued them across the Euphrates and all the way to Hamath" (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, p. 450).

This is the historical context of the events described in the first prophecy of [Jeremiah 46](#). It appears to have been recorded here after the fact (compare verse 2) but originally spoken or written by Jeremiah at the very time the battle of Carchemish was being engaged (compare verses 3-10). Perhaps God gave the prophet a vision of what was actually occurring far away.

Until 1956, the "battle of Carchemish" rested entirely on biblical evidence, although Greek records indicated a major struggle. Then, in 1956, J.D. Wiseman discovered a Babylonian tablet that gave details of the battle, confirming the Biblical account. "In [Leonard] Woolley's excavations at Carchemish a large private house was examined and produced finds bearing on these times. Bronze figurines of Egyptian gods...[and] clay seals...bearing the name of Necho himself came to light, thus giving mute evidence of the presence of the Egyptians there" (Emil Kraeling, *Rand McNally Bible Atlas*, 1956, p. 312).

Verses 3-4 show the proud, well-armed force of Necho coming forward only to turn and flee in verse 5. In verse 6, God orders pursuit by the Babylonians of the fleeing force. Verses 7-10 then recap the scene. Egypt's army surges forward like a flooding river (verses 7-8). "The figure is appropriate in addressing Egyptians, as the Nile, their great river, yearly overspreads their lands with a turbid, muddy flood. So their army, swelling with arrogance, shall overspread the region south of Euphrates; but it, like the Nile, shall retreat as fast as it advanced" (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary*, note on verse 7). Verse 9 mentions foreign mercenary forces serving in the Egyptian army.

Verse 10 declares that the Egyptian defeat is God's vengeance—perhaps for the death of Josiah. The "day of the LORD" reference here is also interesting to consider. While it applied to the immediate situation of Necho's defeat, perhaps it also referred to events far in the future. We know from other prophecies that Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya of the end time will be devastated by an invading force from the north, the final successor of ancient Babylon (see [Daniel 11:40-43](#)).

In verses 11-12 of [Jeremiah 46](#), the Egyptian army is told to go to Gilead for its famous healing balm. Perhaps this was telling the Egyptians to retreat south (where Gilead was in relation to Carchemish) and nurse their wounds, as they actually did in a way, fleeing south to Hamath, their Syrian headquarters. But there was no cure for them as God was

behind their defeat. The Egyptian forces were unable to hold out at Hamath and again fled south. The reference to the balm of Gilead is similar to the one in [Jeremiah 8:22](#), where God uses it as an illustration to His own people that there is no healing for those who rebel against Him. Certainly God is no respecter of persons, so the Egyptians would suffer the same humiliation that Judah had. And so will the enemies of God's people in the end time.

Jehoiakim's Rebellion

A historical context for this section is helpful. Biblical historian Eugene Merrill writes: "As the author of Kings indicates, Jehoiakim remained a loyal subject to the Babylonians for...three years (605-602 [B.C.]). He then rebelled for some unexpressed reason.... Nebuchadnezzar had undertaken several western campaigns against Judah's neighbors. It may have been his preoccupation with these states...that gave Jehoiakim the courage to break his alliance with Nebuchadnezzar" (*Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 1987, p. 451).

One source "associates Jehoiakim's rebellion with the Babylonian conflict with Egypt in the winter of 601/600 B.C., which is attested to by a letter written in Aramaic from the town of Saqqarah" (p. 451, footnote). Another source "points out that the campaign against Jehoiakim is not mentioned in the Babylonian records...because Nebuchadnezzar's main objective was Egypt and not Judah" (p. 451, footnote). The reference here is to Nebuchadnezzar's fourth year, when "he engaged Neco II in a great battle near the border of Egypt, a contest which evidently ended in a draw. Perhaps the Babylonian was not altogether unsuccessful, however, for he may have brought Judah back under his control in the course of this campaign" (p. 451).

This seems likely, especially given what Scripture says right after describing the Babylonian response to Jehoiakim's rebellion: "And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore..." ([2 Kings 24:7](#)).

This makes it appear that the king of Egypt coming out of his land had something to do with Jehoiakim's rebellion. [Jeremiah 47](#), in the current reading, mentions an Egyptian pharaoh of Jeremiah's time attacking Gaza, the southernmost of the major Philistine cities, right near the border with Egypt. We have no parallel record of this event in secular history, which makes the dating of it difficult. But it would seem to tie into these events, and certainly occurred before [2 Kings 24:7](#).

Perhaps Necho attacked Gaza sometime in 602 B.C., which would have been an incursion into Babylonian territory—Nebuchadnezzar having subdued the Philistines in 604. This may well have prompted Jehoiakim to rebel against Babylon, declaring Judah's reaffiliation with Egypt. "Retribution was swift and sure ([2 Kings 24:1-2](#)). Nebuchadnezzar sent troops from Babylonia and from some of his western vassal states such as Aram, Moab, and Ammon, and forced Jehoiakim to submit. The chronicler says that Nebuchadnezzar went as far as to bind Jehoiakim with shackles in order to take him as a prisoner of war to Babylon ([2 Chronicles 36:6](#)). Apparently he relented [as Jehoiakim remained as king for a few more years] but as punishment stripped the temple of many of its sacred articles [as he had before] and took them to his own pagan temples in Babylon. Thereafter until his death in 598 Jehoiakim remained in subservience to the Babylonian overlord" (p. 451). After dealing with Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar apparently continued on to his engagement with Necho, in which the pharaoh was pushed back into Egypt.

While Jehoiakim's death is recorded, none of the details regarding it are given. We do know from Jeremiah's prophecies that this wicked ruler was to die without lamentation from the people, being cast out and buried as a donkey (see [Jeremiah 22:18-19](#); [Jeremiah 36:30](#)). His lineage would not continue to rule, as his son's reign would last but a few months.

Prophecies Against Egypt and Philistia

Before the Egyptian attack on Gaza, Jeremiah prophesied against Egypt ([Jeremiah 46:13-26](#)). While Babylon is the one coming against Egypt (verse 26), God is the one bringing the punishment (see verses 15, 18, 25). The prophecy concludes with "an effective contrast, a sound of an incredible weakness where the roar as of a lion is necessary: the snake, Egyptian symbol of royalty, creeping back into its hole. The hiss of enmity is ineffective, as the Babylonians come on as an army of woodcutters levelling Egypt as a forest appointed for timber felling" (*New Bible Commentary*, note on [Jeremiah 46:22-24](#)). This prophecy speaks of far more than what Nebuchadnezzar did in his campaign against Egypt of 601. Rather, it looks a number of years forward, beyond even the fall of Judah in 586 B.C., to the time when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt "in 568 and laid waste a great part of the Nile valley" (Merrill, p. 475). In fact, Egypt was made part of the Babylonian Empire. And Jeremiah foresaw it all, at least 34 years in advance. For more prophecies against Egypt, see [Ezekiel 29-32](#).

Egypt's desolation, we are told, would not last forever ([Jeremiah 46:26](#)). Furthermore, hope is then given to Israel (verses 27-28). Even though Israel was being rightly punished, it too would not suffer forever. Speaking to Jacob and Israel rather than Judah, this is a prophecy to all 12 tribes, which will be brought back to the Promised Land after Christ's return. Perhaps this prophecy is placed here because both Israel and Judah had pinned their hopes on Egypt, which provided them no help. Indeed, trusting in such allies rather than God is part of the reason they are being punished. The end-time context of this prophecy's fulfillment may indicate some duality in the prophecy against Egypt—that part of *it* may be for the end time as well, when Egypt will again fall to a northern invader (see [Daniel 11:40-43](#)).

Egypt may seem an insignificant nation to the casual observer of world affairs, but it is a leading nation among the Muslim nations of North Africa and the Middle East. Additionally, radical Muslim terrorist cells

thrive there (one of which assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981). The Bible indicates that Egypt will figure prominently in the international politics of the end time.

In [Jeremiah 47](#), we see God's judgment on Philistia. The Philistines were quite often an enemy of Israel. Their close proximity made them a dangerous thorn in Israel's side, somewhat like the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are to the nation of Israel today.

The Philistines ([Jeremiah 47:1](#)) and Caphtorim (verse 4) were closely related ([Genesis 10:4](#)) and probably intermingled. Of the original Philistine pentapolis—Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron (see [Joshua 13:3, NIV](#))—only Gaza and Ashkelon are mentioned in [Jeremiah 47](#). Among all the biblical prophecies of the Philistines, mention is made of four of these cities. "It is noteworthy that Gath is not mentioned in these prophecies, from which it may be inferred that Gath ceased to be of any major significance after the time of Uzziah" ("Philistines," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1986, p. 843).

In verse 2 we read of a flood of waters from the north. Generally, as we have repeatedly seen, invasions from Mesopotamia followed a route that brought them into Canaan and Philistia from the north. "Waters sometimes signify multitudes of people and nations ([Rev. 17:15](#)), sometimes great and threatening calamities ([Ps. 69:1](#)); here they signify both" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, note on verse 2).

Nebuchadnezzar attacked Ashkelon in 604 B.C., as earlier mentioned. But the prophecy in [Jeremiah 47](#) appears to have been delivered after that time. Indeed, there is a hint of that in the fact that a "remnant" of Ashkelon is here mentioned (verse 5). The Philistines, which have already been attacked, are going to be hit again. Notice the specific reason here: "To cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains" (verse 4). This provides us with the time of the destruction

mentioned. "Within a year of the conquest of Jerusalem [in 586 B.C.] Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the island portion of Tyre, having already brought Sidon, Arvad, and the mainland portion of Tyre under his control [shortly before]. The siege lasted for thirteen years" (Merrill, p. 475). So this prophecy refers to the overrunning of Philistia by Nebuchadnezzar's armies around the time of the fall of Judah. As with Egypt, though Babylon is the agent of destruction, God is the one who brings it (verses 6-7).

But the prophecy may have another fulfillment that is yet future. Almost certainly a small percentage of today's Palestinians, especially those in the Gaza Strip, are descendants of the Philistines. Interestingly, "the Greek name [for the land of Israel], Palestine, was derived from the name Philistia" ("Philistines," *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 1970, p. 859). The next three nations mentioned in the book of Jeremiah—Moab, Ammon and Edom in chapters 48-49—are also represented in today's Palestinian population in both Israel and Jordan. So it may be that [Jeremiah 47-49](#) refers, at least in part, to end-time calamity to come upon the Palestinians—again from out of the north.

Other prophecies of the Philistines may be found in [Isaiah 14:29-31](#), [Ezekiel 25:15-17](#), [Amos 1:6-8](#), [Zephaniah 2:4-7](#) and [Zechariah 9:5-7](#)."

[END]

Day 581 – SATURDAY: January 25th

Jeremiah 19 & Jeremiah 20

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Chapter 19 contains the sign of the smashed clay flask. "Like the previous oracle this is an acted parable. The place is significant, the valley of Ben-hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, i.e. the rubbish tip [garbage dump] for broken crockery" (*New Bible Commentary*, note on verses 1-2). Indeed, Jeremiah escorts a number of elders and priests out to the trash dump to witness what is

to become of Jerusalem. Some of the prophecy here regarding Tophet and the Valley of Hinnom, it should be noted, is repeated from [Jeremiah 7:31-33](#). Tophet was the place in the Valley of Hinnom where children were sacrificed in pagan ritual, one of the most abhorrent customs the Israelites adopted from the Canaanites. Josiah had destroyed this place and it was now just a big trash pile in the valley.

Many innocents had died here, but now many guilty would die or be cast here—the corpses of the people of Jerusalem thrown out onto this heap. The dead would thus be given over to wild animals, causing the desecration of their remains ([Jeremiah 19:7](#)). Compounding the horror, the people of Judah would sink to cannibalism out of desperate hunger during the coming Babylonian siege (verse 9), as God had pronounced at the time of Moses in the curses for disobedience to His laws (see [Deuteronomy 28:52-57](#)).

Jeremiah then smashed the clay flask as he was instructed, rendering it no longer useful ([Jeremiah 19:10-11](#)). It is interesting that this imagery followed the previous chapter, wherein God as the potter declared that He could refashion the people if they were willing. But they had refused—and therefore they will be smashed and, like this clay flask, cast into the refuse of Hinnom. God explained that just as Tophet, a place of pagan sacrifice, had been destroyed and turned into a garbage dump, so Jerusalem—the whole of which was a place of pagan sacrifice—would be destroyed in like manner (verses 12-13).

Some people today in their arrogance criticize God for being unfair. They fail to realize how great God is and how insignificant all mankind is by comparison. The potter analogy is a reminder of stark reality. As our Creator, God may shape us as a potter shapes clay. Like the potter, He can keep and use a vessel (a person) able to be shaped into a form of His choosing. Or, like the potter, He can simply discard the vessel that cracks or becomes misshapen in the process of His working with it. Of

course, this is merely an analogy, which serves to illustrate a limited point. It does not convey the loving family relationship God seeks with mankind or the full spiritual potential He plans for it. Nonetheless, it remains a sober reminder of how insignificant a human being is compared to God, as well as of the fact that God will destroy the rebellious in *gehenna* (the Valley of Hinnom), a trash dump.

Jeremiah Put in the Stocks

Jeremiah then proclaims the message of doom right in the temple court (verses 14-15)—with the elders and priests who returned with him probably explaining to others what they had just seen him do.

Pashhur, the "chief governor" of the temple—a priest who was head of security, being over the temple guards—takes action against Jeremiah for his pronouncements ([Jeremiah 20:1-2](#)). Pashhur had evidently proclaimed, perhaps even in God's name, that Jerusalem would not be destroyed (see verse 6). He is incensed at Jeremiah's preaching, perhaps viewing him as an insurrectionist. As it stood, things were going quite well under Babylonian vassalship.

Whatever his motive, Pashhur "struck" Jeremiah (verse 2)—meaning either that he personally hit him or had another guard do so, perhaps to arrest him, or that he had the prophet beaten. This is the first recorded instance of actual physical violence against Jeremiah. Pashhur then had God's prophet put into the stocks. "The Heb[rew] word (*mahpeket*) means 'causing distortion,' and the stocks forced arms, neck, and legs into an extremely painful position" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 1-6). While Jeremiah had escaped punishment a few years earlier by a council ruling, Jehoiakim may have overturned that ruling by his killing of Urijah (see [Jeremiah 26](#)). Or perhaps Pashhur had authorization to hold anyone temporarily at his own discretion until a higher order was issued.

In any event, Passhur's treatment of God's prophet led to a pronouncement of divine judgment, which Jeremiah delivered when he was brought out of the stocks the next day—showing that the prophet had suffered in them overnight. Jeremiah declares that Pashhur, whose name meant "Large" or "Free," which implied safety and security such as he proclaimed for Jerusalem, would instead be called *Magor-Missabib*, meaning "Fear on Every Side" ([Jeremiah 20:3](#)). Pashhur, his family and his friends would all be dragged away captive to die in Babylon (verse 6).

The rest of chapter 20 shows the personal anguish Jeremiah experienced. In verse 7, the word the King James Version renders "deceived" is better translated "enticed," "persuaded" or, as in the New King James Version, "induced." God had called Jeremiah with a strong appeal and, though Jeremiah gave some resistance, the urging of God was just too strong to deny. But in following His call and commission, the prophet was mocked every day. It got so bad that Jeremiah tried to cease prophesying (verses 8-9). But that was even harder to endure, so powerful was the urge to declare God's message when it so very much needed to be said (verse 9)—particularly with all the taunting that just continued anyway (verse 10).

We find the scorners making fun of what Jeremiah had proclaimed regarding the new name of Pashhur, "Fear on Every Side" (same verse). However, Jeremiah is confident that God is with him and will judge these mockers (verse 11). He prays for God's intervention (verse 12) and then rejoices in God's deliverance (verse 13) in terms reminiscent of [Psalm 109:30-31](#).

But then he sinks back into terrible depression ([Jeremiah 20:14-18](#))—perhaps because God has not yet put an end to the mocking. It just goes on and on and on. Perhaps he had even been thrown back into the stocks for a time. Whatever the case, we again see the humanity of Jeremiah. Subject to constant ridicule, dire threats and now humiliating

punishment, he felt so alone. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* states, "He had encountered more opposition from more enemies than any other O[ld] T[estament] prophet" (introductory notes on Jeremiah). Perhaps we can identify with the feelings he must have had to some extent. Other heroes of the Bible experienced similar moments. In wishing that he had never been born, he was echoing the cry of one of God's great servants, Job (see [Job 3](#)). Of course, this is a passing phase that Jeremiah does overcome. In times of severe suffering, human beings think and say things that are not complete thoughts, but fragments of feelings and emotions that well up from deep inside. Indeed, all of us vent occasionally with outbursts due to frustrations, and what we say at such times isn't necessarily what we truly mean or think.

God's people do stumble at times, but they rise to go forward again and again ([Proverbs 24:16](#)), as Jeremiah certainly did. We should not be too hard on him here, but should rather learn a lesson about the need for endurance—a need Jesus Christ and His followers proclaimed ([Mark 13:13](#); [Matthew 10:22](#); [1 Corinthians 13:7](#); [James 1:12](#); [Hebrews 10:36](#)).” [END]