JEHOIACHIN AND HIS ORACLE:
THE SHAPHANIDE LITERARY FRAMEWORK FOR THE END OF THE
DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

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Abstract

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Four oracles appear in Jeremiah 21:11-23:8 detailing the failure and future of the final kings in Judah, also known as the King Collection. The final oracle against Jehoiachin (he also appears with the names Coniah / Jeconiah) precedes the announcement of the unnamed new Davidide, the Branch.

The oracle against Jehoiachin appears to be unique, involving no stipulations of covenant wrongdoing, a feature of Deuteronomistic criticism of the kingship since Solomon. He is one of the most unremarkable kings in Israelite history. Yet, he is the concluding figure in both the Greek (Septuagint or LXX) and Hebrew (Masoretic Text or MT) versions of Jeremiah’s King Collection, a significant change from the accounts in Kings and Chronicles. He occupies an important place in Josephus’s attempts to sketch the ideal Israelite king, respectful of Roman rule. He is important to the rabbis in developing an atonement theory of the exile. In the New Testament, he appears in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus, while the other kings from the King Collection disappear. The Epistle to the Hebrews may adopt similar ideas in developing the analogy of Melchizedek, another insignificant king in Israel’s history, as a precursor to Jesus. Ideas developed from the flow of the oracle in the text of Jeremiah, shaped by the polemics of
exile, appear in the Acts of the Apostles’ casting of Jesus’ spiritual kingship on the world’s stage.

Precritical Jewish and Christian exegesis adopted a harmonizing approach to the oracle, importing reasons from the Deuteronomistic History and the Chronicler for its harsh judgment. Yet discussion of the oracle and its significance in the construction of the figure of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah has all but disappeared from critical scholarship following the groundbreaking work of Bernhard Duhm. Early critical scholarship, while correcting many of the mistakes of precritical exegetes, followed the new Protestant confessionalism of the 19th century. Michel Foucault locates the loss of the theology of the cross as this decisive turn in interpretive methodology. This turn caused modern Protestant interpreters, who are mainly responsible for the foundations of modern critical studies in Jeremiah, to devalue disempowered kings in Israel’s history, one of the most important hermeneutical categories in classical Jewish literature, according to Yair Lorberbaum. Thus, Bernhard Duhm, and later scholarship that builds on his work, missed the significance of this oracle in the textual function of the book of Jeremiah and its polemical significance in the debates between post-exile groups of Judeans. Gerhard von Rad, in his revision of Martin Noth’s theory of the Deuteronomistic History, saw the importance of Jehoiachin as a source of hope for a renewed Israel. Jack Lundbom most recently observed the development of an oracular frame moving from the center outward in which the oracle against Jehoiachin appears. Yet, to date, little work has appeared on the way the canonical form of Jeremiah frames Jehoiachin and its effect on Jeremiah’s end to the DtrH.
To make sense of it, we must account for what appears to be an unfulfilled prophecy in Jeremiah 22, as recorded by Jehoiachin’s treatment in Jeremiah 52 where, against the expectation of the oracle, the Jewish king again appears on the world stage. Mark Roncace has written extensively on how this type of prophecy functions in the book of Jeremiah. Speech-act theory, as proposed originally by J. L. Austin, and refined by his protégé, John Searle, provides further insight into this issue. Building on the scholarship of von Rad, Lundbom, Mark Leuchter and several other scholars of the sociopolitical forces in the production of biblical texts in exile, we will reconstruct the remarkably adaptable prophetic frame developed in exile around Jehoiachin and his oracle, which set the stage for a return of a Jewish king to the world stage.
Acknowledgments

First, I must thank my advisor, Prof. Mark Leuchter, who has been an unflagging supporter of this project since I first presented it to him and his colleague, Prof. Jeremy Schipper, in my first semester at Temple. Mark has also been an honest critic, always with the intent of making my work better. Further, his pleasant and cheerful personality makes working with him a true joy. I must also thank Prof. Leuchter’s colleague, Prof. Schipper, who also has shown support, suggested additional avenues for research and provided numerous helpful editorial comments and has a great sense of humor. Mark and he make an outstanding, positive team in Hebrew Bible. All the work I did for them had a profound effect on the pages that follow.

Professor Vasiliki Limberis supported and encouraged my efforts to trace the links between Jeremiah’s and Acts’ portrayals of the Israelite kingship. She also presented invaluable suggestions for potential effects this research may have had on New Testament and patristic studies. Prof. Daniel O’Hara in the English department was of great help in exploring the philosophical, cultural and religious milieu in which Bernhard Duhm, the father of all critical Jeremiah studies, labored. Prof. Joseph Margolis in the philosophy department always had engaging, critical input for my investigations of the application of Gadamerian hermeneutics and speech-act theory to Jeremiah studies.

Although my work with the following professors does not appear in this dissertation, their input was invaluable in helping me understand the position of Jeremiah vis-à-vis other religions. Prof. Zain Abdullah graciously encouraged me to pursue potential parallels between the often-stormy relationship between Jeremiah and Israelite royalty and the prophetic stance of the Qu’ran vis-à-vis rulers. Prof. Julius Tsai, former
professor of Chinese religions, encouraged me to explore possible parallels between Jeremiah and Confucius, first suggested by Old Testament scholar H. H. Rowley.

I am grateful to Prof. Tremper Longman of Westmont College, whose course on Jeremiah and Lamentations as a visiting professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in the winter of 2008 first piqued my interest in Jeremiah studies in general and this issue in particular. Prof. Longman’s colleagues Doug Green, Pete Enns and Dan McCartney also provided much encouragement. Finally, my strongest early catalyst for the study of the Hebrew Bible came during my years at Yale Divinity School (1994-1997) under the tutelage of my late and beloved advisor, Prof. Brevard Childs. He never tired of my questions, understood the critical issues thoroughly and taught me that the canonical layer of the text is not a dead husk, but an integral part in arranging confused and cacophonous voices into something resembling a symphony. Of course, none of these scholars bears any responsibility for any mistakes or flaws, which are mine alone.

My three daughters (ages 20, 19, and 11) and my son (age 17) have been unfailingly supportive, never asking, “Dad, when will you be done?” Rather, their only question was, “How soon can we call you Dr.?” Finally, I owe a profound measure of gratitude to Cindy, my wife. Without her full support from the beginning, this work would not have been possible. She and I know this is no truism. From the beginning of this exacting process, she encouraged and supported me, even taking time off from her own graduate studies so I could concentrate on this dissertation.

*Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is more precious than rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life... (Proverbs 31)*
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Introduction

The Oracle and the King

By most accounts, king Jehoiachin in Judah is a most unremarkable and unimpressive character.¹ His name is probably a throne name given to show his vassal-status; he also appears as Coniah and Jeconiah.² In the canonical account of the Hebrew Bible, he appears only briefly and his main purpose in the Biblical history seems to be that he was the king who surrendered to king Nebuchadnezzar. He was probably about 18 when he ascended the throne, and likely reigned for little more than three months.³ He appears as the penultimate figure in Israel’s history in the Chronicler and the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). Importantly, however, he is the final king to receive a judgment oracle in Jeremiah 21:11- 23:8 (known as the “King Collection”).


³ The Chronicler reports that he was 8 (2 Chron. 36:9), but this is surely an example of the difficulties with digits dropping out in Hebrew numbers in different texts claiming to report the same event. Cf. a seminal discussion on Hebrew numerology in George E. Mendenhall, “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 77, no. 1 (March 1, 1958): 52–66. This is broadened in John William Wenham, “Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967): 21. Cf. also the
The oracle against Jehoiachin reads:

Jeremiah 22:24–30 Judgment on Coniah (Jehoiachin)

24 As I live, says the LORD, even if King Coniah son of Jehoiakim of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, even from there I would tear you off 25 and give you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and into the hands of the Chaldeans. 26 I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. 27 But they shall not return to the land to which they long to return.

28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken pot, a vessel no one wants? Why are he and his offspring hurled out and cast away in a land that they do not know?

29 O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! 30 Thus says the LORD: Record this man as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days; for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David, and ruling again in Judah.

Following the lead of most critical interpretations, the first half of the judgment appears in prose, reflected in the paragraph style of the NRSV in English. The final three verses appear in poetic form, reflecting the critical consensus that the oracle is a compilation of both prose and poetry. Since the groundbreaking critical foundation laid by Bernhard Duhm, this is a standard way of attempting to separate out redactional layers in the canonical text. According to this methodology, poetry generally signifies an earlier stage in the development of the text, closer to, if not actually, the words of the prophet Jeremiah himself. Most scholars believe that later scribal editors, following the lead of Baruch and Seraiah, sons of Shaphan, added the prose sections. Thus, they and their circle of fellow-workers received the appellation “Shaphanides.” The Shaphanides were
Levites, and the Levites, whatever the differences between the Levites at Anathoth and the Levites in Jerusalem, were still committed to a Davidic kingship. Baruch, exiled to Egypt along with Jeremiah against their wishes by some of their own compatriots, likely led the Egyptian Shaphanid textualization process of Jeremiah’s works and became the basis for the Greek translation found in the LXX. Shaphanides likely completed the work under the direction of Seraiah, or possibly by Seraiah himself, in Babylon. The Babylonian version became the one to receive canonical status several hundred years later.

The only other information that we have about the historical figure of Jehoiachin appears in the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH), which concludes at the end of 2 Kings. There, it concludes its account of the end of Israel’s history with a chapter with many similarities to the last chapter in Jeremiah, chapter 52. The consensus among scholars holds that an intentionally close relationship exists between the end of the DtrH and the conclusion of the book of Jeremiah. Most scholars understand the line of influence to run from the DtrH to Jeremiah. Yet, the DtrH account, unlike Jeremiah, records of Jehoiachin: “He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, just as his father had done” (2 Kings 24:9, NRSV). Interestingly, and important for our purposes, neither the DtrH nor the Chronicler give any specific instances of evil that Jehoiachin had done, and Jeremiah does not include this formula in the oracle against Jehoiachin.

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4 The text itself makes clear to point out that a later hand added this: “…Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.” (Jer. 51:64, NRSV) This forms a neat *inclusio* with Jer. 1:1.

5 1 Esdras 1:43 and the Chronicler, whose interests are mainly to the side of our investigation, also recites (as both the Chronicler and the DtrH recite of nearly all the kings), that Jehoiachin “… did evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 36:9, NRSV).
Taking the kings from the King Collection in chronological order, as they appear in Kings and Chronicles, we read:

1. Of Jehoiakim

“Jehoiakim ... did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as all his ancestors had done. In his days King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up; Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him.” (2 Kings 23:36–24:1, NRSV)

“Jehoiakim ... did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ... the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah...” (2 Chronicles 36:5–8, NRSV)

2. Of Jehoahaz (=Shallum)\(^6\)

“He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his ancestors had done.” (2 Kings 23:32, NRSV)

3. Of Jehoiakim and Jehoahaz/Shallum\(^7\)

“Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages; who says, “I will build myself a spacious house with large upper rooms,” and who cuts out windows for it, paneling it with cedar, and painting it with vermilion. Are you a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the LORD. But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.” (Jeremiah 22:13–17, NRSV)

4. Of Zedekiah (=Mattaniah)


\(^7\) Lundbom appears to believe that Jeremiah 22:13-17 applies only to Jehoiakim (Ibid., 21A:95.). However, it is more likely that the standard introduction in verse 11, "For thus says the Lord concerning Shallum..." applies to 13-17, and the beginning of verse 18, "Therefore thus says the Lord concerning King Jehoiakim..." includes 13-17 as the reasons for the terrible end predicted for Jehoiakim in 18-19.
“[Zedekiah] did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered the LORD that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.” (2 Kings 24:19–20, NRSV)

“Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God; he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. All the leading priests and the people also were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of the LORD that he had consecrated in Jerusalem.” (2 Chr 36:11–14, NRSV)

In fact, David Janzen has argued recently that the ending of Kings, when read synchronically, addresses the Davidide in exile, Jehoiachin. The point, according to Janzen, is that Jehoiachin can learn from the examples of Josiah and Manasseh that repentance and righteous action can erase their negative evaluations from before Yahweh. Then he can again lead the nation in repentance as Josiah did.8 However, the Jeremiah corpus draws a different lesson, followed by the prophecy of the unnamed Branch in 23:5-6, who will initiate a new exodus that will make the exodus under Moses fade from their memories:

“The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, “As the LORD lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt,” but “As the LORD lives who brought out and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.” Then they shall live in their own land.” (Jeremiah 23:5–8,

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This is the first clue that leaves open the possibility of another tradition about Jehoiachin that focused on reasons other than covenant-wrongdoing for his being the unfortunate king in power when Nebuchadnezzar exiled Judah. I will argue that this was a critical theological concern of the Shaphanide scribal circle initially under the leadership of Baruch in Egypt, and then increasingly passing to the golah-group in Babylon under Seraiah.

The discovery of the Babylonian Chronicle confirms the few sparse details found in the Bible’s account of Jehoiachin, adding some details about the good treatment he received at the end of his life, just as the three accounts in Jeremiah, the DtrH and the Chronicler, attest. Thus for critical scholarship he is unremarkable as well, leaving behind no tangled historical web to unravel, nothing to incite scholarly controversy, and of little interest except as a historical footnote to the last days of the remains of the nation of Israel and Judah before exile. In a bit of scholarly irony, the scholar who pays the most attention to the development of the literary character of Jehoiachin believes there is nothing of historical value in the book of Jeremiah.

Yet here, at least, we do have access to reliable historical information about an actual person named Jehoiachin. Further, evidence reveals that later interpretive traditions sharply increased in significance, extending back even to the days of the final

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composition of the canonical book.\textsuperscript{11} Although answered formulaically in the DtrH and the Chronicler, the “Why?” questions appear to drive the Shaphanide portrayal and interpretation of the significance of the life of Jehoiachin. In good scribal fashion, they do not provide the answers, but allow later generations to reflect upon them in the way they rearranged the text according to their unique viewpoint as the following table illustrates.

\textsuperscript{11} Mark Leuchter, \textit{The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 159. Leuchter adds an important caveat: that even in the polemical debates, the competing interpretations needed to find some basis in authentic Jeremianic traditions. Ibid., 14.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH) 2 Kings 23-25</th>
<th>Chronicler 2 Chron 36</th>
<th>Jeremiah Jer 21-52 (both LXX and MT)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kings 23:31–32</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 36:1–3</td>
<td>Jer 21:1-9 (moved to top) This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah (ṣîdkeyâḥû) sent to him...Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I am going to turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands... See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Those who stay in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but those who go out and surrender to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have their lives as a prize of war.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jehoahaz [=Shallum] was twenty-three years old when he began to reign; he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his ancestors had done.”</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 36:5-8 “Jehoiakim was twenty- “Jehoiakim gave the silver 36:5-8 “Jehoiakim was twenty- 22:15-19 “Are you a king because</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23: 35-24: 5</td>
<td>22: 11-13 For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum son of King Josiah of Judah, who succeeded his father Josiah, and who went away from this place: He shall return here no more, but in the place where they have carried him captive he shall die, and he shall never see this land again. Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages…</td>
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</table>
and the gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land in order to meet Pharaoh’s demand for money. He exacted the silver and the gold from the people of the land, from all according to their assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Neco. ... He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as all his ancestors had done. ... Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, for all that he had committed, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to pardon...

Jehoiakim slept with his ancestors; then his son **Jehoiachin** succeeded him. The king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken over all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Wadi of Egypt to the River Euphrates. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign; he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his father had done, ...

Jehoiakin was five years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ... the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah;

you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the LORD. But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence. Therefore thus says the LORD concerning King **Jehoiakim** son of Josiah of Judah: They shall not lament for him, saying, “Alas, my brother!” or “Alas, sister!” They shall not lament for him, saying, “Alas, lord!” or “Alas, his majesty!”

24: 6b-9

36:8c-10

22:24-30

As I live, says the LORD, even if King **Coniah** son of Jehoiakim of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, even from there I would tear you off and give you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and into the hands of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But they shall not return to the land to which they long to return. Is this man Coniah a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24:17-20</th>
<th>36:11-14</th>
<th>23:5-6 (brackets with 22:1-9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered the LORD that he expelled them from his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.</td>
<td>Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God; he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel.</td>
<td>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the land. In his days Judah
will be saved and Israel will
live in safety. And this is
the name by which he will
be called: “The LORD is
our righteousness.”
(ṣīdkēnū)

| 25:27-30 “In the thirty-seventh year of
| the exile of King Jehoiachin
| of Judah, in the twelfth
| month, on the twenty-
| seventh day of the month,
| King Evil-merodach of
| Babylon, in the year that he
| began to reign, released
| King Jehoiachin of Judah
| from prison; he spoke
| kindly to him, and gave him
| a seat above the other seats
| of the kings who were with
| him in Babylon. So
| Jehoiachin put aside his
| prison clothes. Every day of
| his life he dined regularly in
| the king’s presence. For his
| allowance, a regular
| allowance was given him
| by the king, a portion every
day, as long as he lived.” |
| Jer. 52:31-34<sup>12</sup>
| In the thirty-seventh year of
| the exile of King Jehoiachin
| of Judah, in the twelfth
| month, on the twenty-fifth
day of the month, King
| Evil-merodach of Babylon,
in the year he began to
| reign, showed favor to King
| Jehoiachin of Judah and
| brought him out of prison;
| he spoke kindly to him, and
gave him a seat above the
| seats of the other kings who
| were with him in Babylon.
| So Jehoiachin put aside his
| prison clothes, and every
day of his life he dined
| regularly at the king’s table.
| For his allowance, a regular
daily allowance was given
| him by the king of Babylon,
as long as he lived, up to the
day of his death.” |

There were good reasons for this later scribal reflection and reordering. Contrary
to the expectations of the oracle, Jehoiachin did have several descendants who eventually
returned to the land of Palestine. The most famous of these was Zerubbabel, although he
never received the title of king, but only that of governor. Even more importantly in the

<sup>12</sup> Note the huge gap separating this final section from the King Collection in Jeremiah!
textual tradition, Jehoiachin appears in the canonical and deuto-canonical literature as the marker of exile.

“He carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon; the king’s mother, the king’s wives, his officials, and the elite of the land, he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.” (2 Kings 24:15, NRSV)

“Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with King Jeconiah of Judah, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away.” (Esther 2:6, NRSV)

“He was one of the captives whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had brought from Jerusalem with King Jeconiah of Judaea. And this was his dream.” (Greek Esther 11:4, NRSV)

“The LORD showed me two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD. This was after King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem King Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim of Judah, together with the officials of Judah, the artisans, and the smiths, and had brought them to Babylon.” (Jeremiah 24:1, NRSV)

“which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did not take away when he took into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon King Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim of Judah, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem—” (Jeremiah 27:20, NRSV)

“I will also bring back to this place King Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”” (Jeremiah 28:4, NRSV)

“This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.” (Jeremiah 29:2, NRSV)

“after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away from Jerusalem Jeconiah and the princes and the prisoners and the nobles and the people of the land, and brought them to Babylon.” (Baruch 1:9, NRSV)

“On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin),” (Ezekiel 1:2, NRSV)

This is significant, for the final exile of Judah generally used in scholarly literature did not happen until 10 years later under his uncle, Zedekiah, in 587/6 BCE.

Thus, the questions raised by the oracle and its subsequent fulfillment – or lack thereof –
in later Jewish history provided the ground that yielded much fruit for later hermeneutical work.

For instance, Josephus devotes a higher proportion of the text of his *Antiquities* to Jehoiachin than any other king in Israel’s history devotes. He goes so far as to call him kind and just (χρηστός, δίκαιος). Josephus also omits the formulaic “… He did evil in the sight of the Lord” found in the DtrH and the Chronicler from any description of Jehoiachin in his writings. The fruit of that and other similar reflection in the post-exilic hermeneutical tradition becomes so large that it prompts comparisons with another insignificant king in Israel’s history, Melchizedek, who, at least at Qumran, became a mythical-historical figure, and appears again in the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament.

The only mention of Jehoiachin in the New Testament appears in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:11), which is intent on connecting Jesus with the line of David. Matthew’s account is strikingly different from the record in Kings. It has raised questions for interpreters from the earliest times of Christian interpretation. Why Jehoiachin should be included in Matthew’s genealogy and the other kings from the King Collection excluded continues to be a matter of scholarly debate.

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14 Ibid., 15–16.


Additional clues show that there was an alternate sense of the significance of Jehoiachin, kept by the Shaphanides, of which the only extant account appears in Jeremiah. This account persisted through exile, the second temple period, through the time of Jesus of Nazareth, and persisted, as we will see, although in differing interpretations, in both Jewish and Christian accounts of the first century CE. Given that both Josephus and the New Testament writers relied mainly on the LXX, for their writings, it should not be surprising that the LXX’s framing of Jehoiachin also becomes significant.

Michael Fishbane, in his magisterial work, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, points out numerous examples of the Bible interpreting itself, constantly applied to new situations. This is certainly the case in Jeremiah, where the LXX and MT differ substantially, most notably in the placement of the Oracles against the Nations (chs. 46-51 in the MT and modern translations of the Bible). Yet, in the LXX and the MT, the oracle against Jehoiachin and the account of his restoration both appear at the same place, chapters 22 and 52, respectively. However, in the LXX, the book of Baruch immediately follows, which begins with a description of Jehoiachin leading the exiles in national
repentance preceding their return to their homeland (Baruch 1:3-9). This difference will become significant, as we will note below.

Clearly, already within the textual traditions themselves, developed in the generation of scribal tradents following Jeremiah amid the polemics of exile, one important question was how to understand Jehoiachin in the light of the unique oracle in Jeremiah. The collection in which the oracle appears differed from the DtrH and the Chronicler by having an obviously topical arrangement, rather than chronological, since Jehoiachin appears last in the King Collection and Zedekiah first. Further, the oracle against Jehoiachin carefully avoids the formulaic stipulations of covenant-wrongdoing found in the DtrH and Chronicler. This is significant, because, as we have noted, the rest of the King Collection does include accusations of specific wrongdoing for each king it accuses – except Jehoiachin.

The question sharpens when it becomes clear that, despite the severity of the oracle, Jehoiachin, in fact, did have children in captivity, as we have noted. Several of them returned to their homeland with the returning exiles and became leaders in the exile community. If we compare the Babylonian Chronicle with I Chronicles 3:17-18, he had at least one wife, and perhaps several wives, as well as five or seven sons. One of his

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18 So it appears in all the standard critical editions such as Alfred Rahlfs, ed., Septuaginta : With Morphology, CD-ROM (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellshhaft, 1996); Henry Barclay Swete, ed., The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint, vol. 3, 3 vols. (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1894); Joseph Zeigler, Jeremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Jeremiae, Vetus Testamentum Graecum, vol. XV, 1st ed., Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2006). Note that there is also a “Jeconiah” mentioned in the reform of Josiah recorded in 1 Esdras 1:9. He appears there as a military captain, and thus is not the same person as in our passage, who would not have been born yet.

sons became the first governor of Judah during the Persian period, and Ezra 1:8 calls him the “Prince of Judah.” He was succeeded by one of Jehoiachin’s grandsons, Zerubbabel (born to another brother, Shealtiel), who, in the canonical and deuterocanonical literature was called “signet ring on the right hand,” (Haggai 2:23, Sirach 49:11), a reference to Jeremiah 22:24, where Jehoiachin is called the same thing. According to the prophet Haggai, this Zerubbabel himself received the prophetic oracle of a greater temple to come. There even appear to be some garbled connections between Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, known as the “Branch,” probably a reference to an enigmatic prophecy in Jeremiah 23:5.

However, Jehoiachin himself never returned from Babylon and none of his offspring ever occupied the throne of Israel. Undoubtedly, a significant factor contributing to this was the succession of imperial hegemony in the region, from Babylon to Rome. Yet there is open-endedness to the book of Jeremiah with the inclusion of chapter 52, apparently in direct contradiction to the oracle of Jeremiah 22, which leaves the future open to interpretation. The book of Acts appears to mirror this in its presentation of the kingship of Jesus expressed through the expansion of the church of Jew and Gentile, also with an open-ended conclusion. I will argue that interpretations

Babylonian Chronicles,” The British Museum Quarterly 21, no. 2 (July 1, 1957): 48–50. “… the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son, Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah;” (1 Chronicles 3:17–18, NRSV)


resonate with the Shaphanide portrayal of Jehoiachin in the book of Jeremiah, in ways that are unique from that of the DtrH and the Chronicler.

Nevertheless, it is well to remember this caution from Robert Carroll: “We may read the story for what it is worth, but we should be careful not to read too much into it.” This is a danger which some contemporary interpreters have already fallen into, one of whom believes that Jehoiachin is the long-sought-for suffering servant of Isaiah 53. To avoid the extremes of either ignoring or over-reading the oracle, we must look at how it was constructed, deconstructed and re-understood by later generations.

**Constructing Jehoiachin and His Oracle**

It seems intuitive that the oracle that announces the specific end of the Davidic line that runs throughout the entire Deuteronomistic History until the exile would generate scholarly attention. Only four verses separate it from the enigmatic promise of the Branch in 23:5, and it plays the pivotal role in the collection of oracles against the final four kings of Judah prior to this unspecified age of the Davidic monarchy in the future. Although dated, Samuel Driver connected this oracle to the previous verses (18-19). While this seems unlikely, and no other scholars have adopted this approach, it

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23 M. Goulder, “Behold My Servant Jehoiachin,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 2 (April 2002): 175–190. We will examine this argument in detail below, to distinguish it from the uses made by Josephus and the New Testament. It has not received broad acceptance among scholars.

does at least point out the textual connections that demonstrate the relationship between
the original cores at the heart of this cycle of oracles.25

Yet the oracle has generated scant attention from scholars, or if it has, it often
appears to be over-interpreted. It receives attention only in a handful of articles and
commentaries that deal with it.26 Most critical scholarship focuses on the exile associated
with the final deportation under Zedekiah in 587/6 BCE. There is good reason for this.
Archaeological excavations have revealed a double destruction at Lachish and Kiriath;
the first, dated to Jehoiachin, a partial destruction, and the final one a complete
destruction, including the destruction of the temple. From a critical perspective, the
significance of the deportation at the time of Jehoiachin was the removal of the ruling and
artisan classes. However, the final destruction under Zedekiah is important because of its
dissolution of many of the markers of Jewish identity: land, temple and the holy city of

25 A development that Jack Lundbom explains in more detail Jack R. Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book

26 Other than the commentaries, see Jeremy Schipper, “‘Exile Atones for Everything’: Coping
Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Jehoiachin”; John Franklin Genung, “This Man Coniah,” The Biblical
World 37, no. 2 (February 1911): 89–99; Goulder, “Behold My Servant Jehoiachin”; Hans-Jürgen
Claus Westermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1980), 252–270; Isaac Kalimi and James D.
Purvis, “King Jehoiachin and the Vessels of the Lord’s House in Biblical Literature,” Catholic Biblical
Quarterly 56, no. 3 (July 1994): 449–457; Ehud Ben Zvi, “Chronicles And The Chronicler: A Response To
I. Kalimi, An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies In The Chronicler, His Time, Place, And Writing,” ed.
Resonances’ with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25:27-30: A Response to Donald F. Murray,” Journal of
Biblical Literature 124, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 521–529. Other literature on Jehoiachin focuses – as do some of
these articles – on the Chronicler’s and DtrH accounts. See, e.g., the canonical references in 1 Chronicles
3:17, Esther 2:6, Ezekiel 1:2. Note also that in 2 Kings 24, "exile" is associated with Jehoiachin, while
Zedekiah is associated with those removed from the presence of the Lord. There is one significant possible
exception: the Chronicler simply says that Nebuchadnezzar "took" Jehoiachin to Babylon, while the
destruction of Jerusalem is associated with exile and Zedekiah in 2 Chronicles 36. For the connection
between Jeremiah and DtrH, McConville notes “...a wider argument in Jeremiah which is decisively
different from DtrH in looking for a future, wholly new establishment of the institutions of Israel, including
the Davidic monarchy (23:5-8; 30:9; 33:14-26).” J. G. McConville, Judgment and Promise: An
Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{27} Yet the canonical and post-canonical tradition focuses \textit{entirely} on the deportation under Jehoiachin as the marker of the beginning of the Jewish exile. This is important for several reasons, not the least of which is that the canonical tradition seemed to recognize the surrender of the king as the surrender of everything.

It also demonstrates a gap in scholarly literature in understanding the ideological concerns of Shaphanide redaction of the book of Jeremiah. The dissolution and restoration of the kingship, which ultimately led to proposed solutions in later messianism, were not simply a project of post-canonical writers, but appear to be something that was already in the consciousness of the Shaphanide formers of the book of Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{28}

Since I am proposing a significantly new reading of Jehoiachin and his oracle, it is fair for readers to ask why this should be significant, and if it is significant, why scant mention of it appears in the scholarly literature. The reason for this state of affairs goes back to the beginning of critical scholarship with Bernhard Duhm, who broke the oracle against Jehoiachin into three fragments. He remarked only that, like other parts of the book, it was an apparently significant thought associated with a remarkably clumsy form, a most glorious prophetic poem along with pieces of rather low quality. Further, anyone who disagreed with his judgment obviously had no sense of literary taste!\textsuperscript{29}


\textsuperscript{28} That this messianic idea develops from the Hebrew Bible is ably shown in Shirley Lucass, \textit{The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity}, The Library of Second Temple Studies v. 78 (London ; New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 15.

\textsuperscript{29} Bernhard Duhm, \textit{Das Buch Jeremia}, Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament 11 (Tubingen and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1901), 179–180. It is also possible that this simply xxvii
This requires careful scrutiny of the philosophical, cultural and especially theological milieu of 19th-century Germany that surrounded and motivated Bernhard Duhm, and, to a lesser extent, Sigmund Mowinckel, the scholar who most expanded and adapted Duhm’s theories on Jeremiah. Duhm and Mowinckel, who were profound critical scholars, also had deep theological commitments that served as lenses through which they viewed the object of their study, in this case the oracle against Jehoiachin. These lenses led them to undervalue its significance in establishing a new theological principle that the Shaphanides under both Baruch and Seraiah used in constructing the final, open-ended history of Israel in Jeremiah (particularly what would become the MT).

However, in fairness to Duhm and Mowinckel, they did not create those lenses, but rather inherited them from a previous generation of scholarship. Many scholars from within the Enlightenment tradition of biblical studies have noted the philosophical bias that Enlightenment thought introduces to the study of ancient texts.30 Thus, it took an anti-Enlightenment scholar with no great interest in religion, theology or biblical texts, to

reflected an inconsistency in Duhm's thought, for elsewhere he acknowledges that the section under discussion reflects a single line of thought. Ibid., xx. One can see the effects of this approach in the work of May, who denies any messianism to Jeremiah at all, thus effectively removing 23:5-6 from Jeremiah's theology entirely. Herbert Gordon May, “The Chronology of Jeremiah’s Oracles,” Journal of Near Eastern Studies 4, no. 4 (October 1945): 217, 222, 223.

30 E.g., Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G Marshall, 2nd, rev. ed. Continuum Impacts (London: Continuum, 2004), 274. To put a finer point on it: “... After Kant, there is a change in the problem of knowledge in two senses. On the one hand, because of the intrinsic circularity of the process of knowledge, the awareness that the linear form of epistemology, what later became foundationalism, was an unsatisfactory approach led to a qualified return to circular strategies for knowledge. On the other hand, because of the rehabilitation of the concept of the historical subject, Heidegger notwithstanding, philosophy moves from the a priori to the a posteriori plane, to society and history, on whose level knowledge in the traditional sense of the term is not possible.” Hans W Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative; a Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 224.
point out the fundamental theological shift that created the period that we now call modernity.

Michel Foucault documents the struggle to redefine Christianity apart from a theology of the cross in his groundbreaking work, *History of Madness*. Here he identifies the critical turning point in the creation of modernity as a Protestant theological problem, a loss of the theology of the cross.31 Because of this new turn in Protestant confessionalism, there was no longer a category for understanding punishment unconnected to the Deuteronomic code or rehabilitation of a condemned king.32

We can observe that, Protestant interpreters, having done away with their historically Christian theology of the cross (that understood Israel’s king to receive royal glory only after abject humiliation), were left without an interpretive category to understand undeserved and ignoble punishment without stipulations of covenant-wrongdoing, in this case, of Jehoiachin.33 Thus, an oracle, which did not fit the new theological parameters of revisionist Protestantism, had no place to go in their critical conceptual framework. This was a great oversight. The theological perspective of Jehoiachin’s oracle is, as well, the one theological point that holds true from chapters 45-52 (MT) at the end of Jeremiah, the principal difference between the LXX and MT.


32 For further discussion of Duhm’s place in this development, see Henning Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 4, Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 50, 61-63 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 335.

Much scholarly attention has focused on the change in the ordering of the Oracles against the Nations (45-51), which appear in the LXX in the middle of the book. Yet it seems that the MT shows us the final editing stage of the Shaphanides under Seraiah in Babylon, and that the oracle against Baruch in chapter 45 relies on this same theological principle as the oracle against Jehoiachin. The following oracles against the nations and in favor of Israel, which also operate on the same principle, conclude with the word of the Lord transferring to Seraiah. Thus, the final chapter of Jeremiah receives its own distinctive Shaphanide cast, which has significant differences from the end of the DtrH.

Concerning Duhm, scholarship, of course, has progressed a great deal since that time, and it is no longer necessary to affirm any confessionalism, conservative, liberal or middling, to do serious scholarly work. However, that in fact may create a different problem. That the modernist Protestant impulse is the most-pervasive model for religious inquiry in American universities is beyond any reasonable doubt. Its continued presence

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34 The scholarly standard work on this subject is William R Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*, updated (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992). The specific application of this to the American university context appears in Conrad Cherry, *Hurrying Toward Zion: Universities, Divinity Schools, and American Protestantism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). Grant Wacker provides a helpful summary in Grant Wacker, “Religious Liberalism and the Modern Crisis of Faith” (National Humanities Center, October 2000), [http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/serve/twenty/tkeyinfo/liberal.htm](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/serve/twenty/tkeyinfo/liberal.htm). The most important scholarly critique of the modernist Protestant paradigm appears in George M Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For a particular look at how this issue appears differently in its Jewish and Christian American contexts, see Yaakov Ariel, “Liberalism in Perspective: Reform Judaism in Comparison to Its Christian Counterparts” (Yale University, September 26, 2009). Further, “While the WPR [World Parliament of Religions, 1893] gave Judaism a voice and put its representatives on the podium with other leaders of world religions, its long-range effects were limited. In theory, the unprecedented conference reflected a recognition and sense of respect of all religions. However, the WPR was a Protestant initiative, and the Protestant liberal activists who presided over it did not really view non-Protestant religions as equal to their faith. Influenced by theories of religious evolution, which prevailed in the late nineteenth century, liberal Protestants had put their faith at the top of the religious evolutionary ladder. In spite of their relative openness to dialogue and their more critical reading of their own sacred Scriptures, liberal Christians held to a triumphalistic vision of Christianity, which they saw as a faith destined to become the world’s all-encompassing religion. Adhering to a messianic view, liberal Christians were certain that they were
in Hebrew Bible studies is a commonplace. Therefore, a generation of scholars less connected with the theological work of synagogue and church, rightly have concerns about the influence of theology on their research. Yet, those scholars without confessional affiliations, or who dismiss them as irrelevant, may fail to realize that they are building on a foundation that understood that the new critical framework for biblical studies also required the new Protestant confessionalism (later known as modernism) in the late 19th century. Thus, the oversight may recur many times over from force of sheer repetition.

To date, no one has invested scholarly effort to recover this oracle from the 19th century German Protestant theological dustbin. Thus, much like Jehoiakim consigned the reading of the scroll to destruction by cutting and burning in Jeremiah 36, so this oracle which announces a significant event in the canonical history of Israel, appears to have lain perhaps not burned, but certainly unattended. It is the hope of this work to redress that imbalance, by understanding the theological argument of the book of Jeremiah, composed in the heat of the polemics of exile immediately following the ministry of Jeremiah. This Shaphanide framing for a prophetic end of what we call the Deuteronomistic History thus allows for the future prophetic blessing that Jeremiah later envisions for Israel.

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35 Hayes, Introduction to the Bible, 118, 163.

Nevertheless, critical scholarship has much to add to this investigation. We summarize here a brief collage of scholars:

- R. E. Clements observed the striking contrast in the flow the text between the absolute finality of the oracle against Jehoiachin in 22:24-30, and the almost blithe, forthright assurance about the future of the Davidic line just five verses later.\textsuperscript{37}

- Christopher Begg has noted that Jehoiachin appears on the list with the “bad kings” of the Deuteronomistic History.\textsuperscript{38}

- Walter Brueggeman observes that the rhetorical form as we have it in the text leads one to expect a covenant indictment.\textsuperscript{39} Yet there is no covenant indictment, only an oracle of doom.

- Joseph Blenkinsopp’s seminal study on prophetism in Israel notes that the last years of Jehoiachin remain in a good deal of obscurity.\textsuperscript{40} Yet, for all his obscurity, like the older story of Melchizedek, he assumes importance in later interpretation out of all proportion to the few life details that appear in Jeremiah, the DtrH and


\textsuperscript{39} Thus argues Walter Brueggemann, “Jeremiah’s Use of Rhetorical Questions,” Journal of Biblical Literature 92, no. 3 (September 1973): 368. According to Seitz, the only other explanation is that a “wooden editor” attributed Zedekiah's wrongdoing to Jehoiachin, a theory that he rejects. Christopher R. Seitz, Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 176 (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 194. Hippolytus first put this theory forth.

Robert Carroll has noted the contrast between the extreme hostility against Jehoiachin in chapter 22 and his most favorable treatment in chapter 52. He sees in this evidence of differing, perhaps even hostile, political factions among the Jews in exile. Yet, Carroll, who probably more than any other scholar recognizes the literary character of the finished book, perhaps precisely because he treated it only as a literary work and not history, does not really do justice to the portrait of Jehoiachin that is yielded at the conclusion of that formation process.

William Schniedewind improves on Carroll’s account. He sees in the ascendance of Jehoiachin from chapter 22 to chapter 52 the evidence that the Babylonian scribal circle received authority over the production of the Hebrew Scriptures in exile. However, he does not account for how such a harsh oracle could turn into

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41 Jehoiachin's inclusion in Matthew's genealogy and the exclusion of the other kings mentioned in Jeremiah 21-23 has exercised interpreters since the beginning of Christian interpretation, including some of the foremost critical scholars on the issue. Moore, “Fourteen Generations,” 99; Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 83.


such an apparently favorable end.

- Brevard Childs notes the commonplace observation that Jeremiah 52 bears many striking resemblances to 2 Kings 25.  
  However, the import lies in the lack of stipulations of covenant wrongdoing against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah as opposed to the DtrH’s consistent criticism of the Davidic kingship since Solomon.  
  It makes clear that the book of Jeremiah intends to make a differing theological point than that found in the final chapter of Kings.

- Christopher Seitz argues that an entire monograph is necessary on this theme, but even in his proposal, the difficulties of reconciling so many conflicting interpretations become apparent.

- In the masterful words of Karl Barth regarding this oracle:

  “... In [Jehoiachin] the goal of Israel seemed to have become its end, the

years, was sufficient to allow any enthusiasm for returning him as King to dissipate, so that it is unlikely that these books were used as propaganda tools for the restoration of the King. Their point is important, but presses the issue too far, as there is clear evidence in the canonical text of Jeremiah itself of political factions, all of whom had a great interest in producing prophetic writings. Leuchter puts this issue succinctly: “Jeremiah xxvi is profoundly concerned with the legitimacy not simply of the prophetic tradition but of scribes as the curators and mediators of that tradition.”


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gracious separation a wrathful rejection.”

However, the problem is not simply a critical one. Pre-critical scholarship often fared no better in finding substantive answers, part of which may be due to the hermeneutical difficulties the prophets always seem to pose for their interpreters. Martin Luther, perhaps presaging later interpreters’ frustrations with the text of Jeremiah, said of the prophets:

*Everybody who is not familiar with their method regards that as an odd way of doing things, and he supposes that they observe no order but ramble along from one subject to another. This seems incomprehensible to all; people cannot get used to it. It is indeed very irritating to read a book that observes no order, in which statements are so disconnected that they do not fit together and therefore lack proper coherence.*

Possible explanations for precritical exegetes ran the gamut of possibilities: that the judgment oracle spoke proleptically against those who denied the virgin birth of Jesus, or that they spoke proleptically of the ignominious sufferings and death of Zedekiah. Many Protestant interpreters could find nothing redeeming in the oracle, drawing nothing more than moralistic conclusions for personal behavior. Others saw significance in the names, as if the two shortened versions were some expression of divine disfavor. Most pre-critical interpreters and post-critical conservative interpreters

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48 Martin Luther, *Lectures on the Minor Prophets II*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 19, American ed. CD-ROM, Luther’s Works (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1974), 159. An alternate version of this quote has been repeated numerous times in the literature on Jeremiah (e.g., Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, Interpretation (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 2. “The prophets have a queer way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next, so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at...”, which comes from a personal translation by Prof. Eudo C. Mason, and is quoted in Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, trans. D. G. M. Stalker, vol. 2 (New York: Harper, 1962), 33, n1. The context of Luther’s quote is important, however, and probably deserves more reflection in the light of critical studies attempting to make sense of the confusion he sees.
have tended toward a harmonizing approach that imports the covenant framework of the DtrH and the Chronicler to explain the oracle in Jeremiah. However, this will not do, as the final form of Jeremiah, shaped by Shaphanide scribal framing, has its own particular take on the circumstances of Jehoiachin’s downfall.

The rabbis proposed that the stark difference in tone between chapters 22 and 52 demonstrate the fact that God had indeed atoned for their sins by exile. In a somewhat ironic twist, Martin Luther, generally not considered a friend of rabbinic interpretations, has a similar interpretation. So does the Lutheran critical scholar Gerhard von Rad, who believed a messianic theme of grace ran through the story of the kings and ended in the hopeful release of Jehoiachin in 2 Kings 25. Yet critical theory since Duhm tends to bypass the oracle against Jehoiachin and Jeremiah 52 and runs the risk of flattening the harsh theme of judgment against Jehoiachin in chapter 22, a harshness that seems unparalleled in the entire book.49

Jack Lundbom broke significant new ground with his commentary on Jeremiah in The Anchor Bible series.50 There, he argued that the prophecy against the last kings of Judah was a collection of oracles that had grown outward from the center. Thus, the Shaphanide editors deliberately re-ordered these oracles to highlight the contrast between


the last king, Zedekiah, who opens the section and the unnamed Branch who closes it.\textsuperscript{51}

The critical linchpin in this section of oracles is the oracle against Jehoiachin, which unlike the others provides an announcement of judgment without any stipulations of covenant wrongdoing. Simply put, without the oracle against Jehoiachin, there is no reason to prophesy a new royal future for the nation of Israel.

Thus, the oracle provides the rhetorical turning point around which the surrounding oracles appear. It provides editorial lenses to frame the entire book, including the concluding chapters in the MT of the Oracles Against the Nations, which are highlighted by a collection of oracles announcing judgment followed by restoration for the surrounding nations (except Babylon) apart from any basis in covenant righteousness. Finally, in the conclusion of the book for Jeremiah, following the typological casting of Babylon in chapters 50-51, there appears what amounts to a typological casting of Jehoiachin in chapter 52 of the Jewish king as a kind of “king of kings” even while the world remains still firmly under Babylonian imperial hegemony.

Second, while the connections in the King Collection between the oracles against Zedekiah, Jehoiakim and Shallum are apparent – stipulations of covenant wrongdoing followed by promises of severe judgment – the rhetorical arrangement of the rest as a whole needs consideration. In the oracle against Jehoiachin, we find only a promise of judgment stripped of any stipulations of covenant wrongdoing. Moreover, in the promise of the Branch, we find stipulations of covenant righteousness followed by promises of great blessing and mercy not only for the Branch, but for the nation as well. Right in the

\textsuperscript{51} Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of,” 711–714.
middle, we find the non-covenantal oracle against Jehoiachin as the hinge point. Thus, there appears to be a progression, apparently, from old covenant to new covenant, hinged on the oracle against Jehoiachin, which provides the historical and theological framing for the actual announcement of the new covenant in the Book of Consolation.

Finally, we will observe textual connections between the oracle against Jehoiachin and the promise of the Branch. In so doing, we must be careful of methods of interpretation that seek to make direct identifications of the promise of the Branch with some definite historical figure, such as Jesus of Nazareth, without taking account of the intervening period of exilic, post-exilic and scribal interpretation.\(^52\) That is not to say that such a move is illegitimate. It is a claim the New Testament makes after all. However, without the intervening period of interpretive history, we do not understand either the exilic and post-exilic Jewish interpretive framework that gave rise to it, or the unlooked-for conclusions it drew. One has only to note the flowering of rabbinic messianic exegesis on this passage in the Midrash Rabbah, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, Midrash on Psalms and Midrash on Proverbs. Significantly, Jeremiah calls the “Branch,” the enigmatic prophetic figure representing the new line of David, צֶמַח (ṣēmāḥ), while Isaiah (11:1) uses חֹטֶר (ḥōtēr). This likely indicates that the Jeremiah passage intends to make a point of its own, and is not simply repeating another part of the overall prophetic tradition, pointing forward to a future ideal king.\(^53\) This unnamed king, now as interpreted


by the Deuteronomic redactors, in contrast to Zedekiah and the other kings accused of
covenant wrongdoing in this passage, will be a righteous one who keeps Torah and forms

Nevertheless, these new potentialities for the nation are not possible without the
purging accomplished by the oracle against Jehoiachin. It clears the ground for the
promise of the Branch, and ultimately a new covenant and a new future for the nation. It
clears new ground for a new reality where the old Davidic covenant is no longer tenable
and where the land is no longer sacred.\footnote{Mark Leuchter, “Jeremiah: The First Jew” (Diss., University of Toronto, 2003), 219. Incidentally, this alone provided the context in which Jeremiah's writings attained credibility and his opponents did not. Leuchter, \textit{The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45}, 35. This also appears to be the perspective of Schniedewind (see above).} Thus also it provides prophetic, truthful history,
not defined in chronological order, but an “…interpretation of history via the symbolic
sequence of the text…”\footnote{Leuchter, \textit{The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45}, 111.} For the Shaphanides, the Deuteronomistic History as it was
conceived under the Davidic theology of 701 BCE must die and somehow rise in
Jehoiachin. Only then could a new nation, a new royal genealogy and a new covenant
arise in the future.
A Word on Method

A study such as the one I am proposing requires a sometimes rather complicated use of various methodologies with varying degrees of precision in terms of the reliability of results. It includes, at times, some interpretive educated guesses, a plausible reconstruction of editorial intent, empirical evidence, philological precision and critical elaboration. The ideal would be to integrate this into a single coherent literary and critical approach. The disadvantage is that this would move the project well beyond the borders of Hebrew Bible research. The most I will attempt is to mark out the various lines of research where possible, acknowledge the fact that these approaches inevitably bleed into one another at various points, and attempt to address them, sometimes imperfectly, as the study goes along. Briefly:

1. In chapter 1, I develop an assessment of the impact and advances made by critical studies since the advent of critical scholarship on Jeremiah by Bernhard Duhm and Sigmund Mowinckel. Their work follows intuitively from the observation, first made by John Calvin, that the prophet Jeremiah himself did not compose the book of Jeremiah. Rather, scribes such as Baruch, Seraiah and other unnamed scribal editors collected and summarized his sermons and oracles.

2. In chapter 2, I attempt the philological precision necessary for understanding the oracle as a literary unit in the Hebrew Bible. Here I also investigate the empirical evidence surrounding Jehoiachin from biblical and Babylonian sources. While there is enough to confirm that Jehoiachin was certainly a historical person, the details are sparse and any
reconstruction necessarily falls short of the demands of modern historical inquiry, which demands confirmation from multiple independent verifiable sources, or, at the least, repeatability and falsifiability. As is the case with the study of many ancient histories and texts, this is a high bar indeed. My main goal is to show that the scribal editors worked with the few historical details and texts that they had available to them, and by adding as little and subtracting as little as possible, by editorially framing and structuring the canonical book of Jeremiah, were able to create a foundation for later hermeneutical development.

3. In chapter 3, I attempt to paint a broad context for what I understand to be the editorial intent in the Shaphanide scribal restructuring of the end of the Deuteronomistic history from the King Collection to the editorial appendix of chapter 52.

4. In chapter 4, I investigate the interpretive speculation that the figure of Jehoiachin inspired in later generations of interpreters over more than half a millennium. In the final section of chapter 4, I take time to investigate the problem of hermeneutics in the post-enlightenment period, and how several representative attempts could be initiated using contemporary hermeneutical methods. As examples, I use Hans-Georg Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” approach and speech-act theory applied to prophetic speech as first suggested by its founder, J. L. Austin, focusing mainly on Austin and speech-act theory.

5. In the conclusion I sketch out possibilities for creating an integrated
whole, although I do not intend this to be a substitute for actually
developing a more integrated, single coherent critical approach. Such a
process has bedeviled theologically redefined Protestant critical
interpretation in ways it has not troubled Catholic, Orthodox or Jewish
interpreters. Such a single coherent critical approach requires revisiting –
and probably severing – the linkage that that revisionist Protestantism
asserted as an ironclad imperative: that unfettered critical study requires
theological redefinition. Both liberal Protestants and their conservative
counterparts will likely need to abandon their continuing conflicts over
this unnecessary assertion to make suitable progress toward a more
integrated, single coherent critical approach. In this way, we hope to avoid
the bane of much contemporary literary criticism: the failure to read the
text closely.

58 For a definition of mask as a multiple, composite construct, see Daniel T. O’Hara, Radical
Parody: American Culture and Critical Agency After Foucault, The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms
Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 14–15. This “mask” continues to exist as something
of a secular god whose roots in 19th-century Protestant theological revisionism exerts an unseen,
omnipresent influence on most critical work, since it was “in the beginning” (of critical study) and
maintains a masterful control. O'Hara observes: “The phantasmagoria of the critic, the competitive inter-
play of his aesthetic ideas produce, inevitably, a master-figure, a mask of the will as it were, what C. G.
Jung calls a "god-image." An antithetical typology of god-images can be envisioned. In fact, Nietzsche
envisioned just such an allegorical representation of the ironic situation of the modern writer—from the very
beginning of his career up until the world was transfigured for him and, all too literally, he became "all the
names in history." Nietzsche's example shows us that the oppositional critic of our culture can isolate and
analyse the (too often) hidden or "unknown" god of a particular writer, a movement, a people of himself. In
so doing, he can offer his prognosis. This unique kind of genealogical analysis forces the critic to discover
his own antithetical will, his own difference, his own "god" (even if it be termed only the "machine" of
language or the discourse of history and power). The play of differences that arises from the contest
between the various facets of the psyche and their competing affections produces the "god." Daniel T.

59 Daniel T. O’Hara, The Art of Reading as a Way of Life: On Nietzsche’s Truth (Evanston, Ill:
Northwestern University Press, 2009), 4.
CHAPTER 1: A HISTORY – AND THEOLOGY – OF SCHOLARSHIP

The oracle against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24-30, when given attention, often has puzzled biblical scholars. This unexpected oracle raises many questions both within the canonical and post-canonical tradition itself, as well as in contemporary scholarship. The redactor who has apparently arranged the oracle appears to be from the same school as the one who describes his rehabilitation in 2 Kings 25:27-30, upon which the conclusion to the entire book of Jeremiah appears based (52:31-34). Yet he has left out any mention of reason for condemnation such as appears in the DtrH and the Chronicler. The final scene of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah, the obvious work of a later editor, appears within the canonical tradition after the announcement of the end of the words of Jeremiah at the end of chapter 51. Clearly, the figure of Jehoiachin extends far beyond this lone oracle in Jeremiah 22, since he appears again significantly in rabbinic tradition, Josephus and the gospel of Matthew as an important transition figure in the genealogy of Jesus.

Significant difficulties surrounding the oracle lie as well in the transmission and production process, for which no scholarly consensus exists. In fact, it is to be wondered why an editor would include the story of Jehoiachin’s rehabilitation at the end of the canonical book of Jeremiah, since it seems to invalidate the oracle in chapter 22. Like many of the prophetic writings, this oracle and the fortunes of the man whom it names appear bewildering and confusing.

Precritical interpreters explained the oracle, given without stipulations of covenant wrongdoing and a restoration without any repentance, by harmonizing the
accounts of what we call the DtrH and the Chronicler. Critical scholarly work on Jeremiah, which began in earnest with Bernhard Duhm and Sigmund Mowinckel, has helped us to hear more clearly the voice of the book of Jeremiah in its own right and in its own process of transmission. Duhm and Mowinckel have had a profound effect on studies regarding Jeremiah, erecting a framework with which scholars must now interact, even if they disagree. No possibility exists of a simple return to a pre-critical phase of scholarship on Jeremiah in an attempt to find unified answers to troubling textual questions, such as those in Jeremiah 22:24-30. The advances made by critical scholarship are undeniable.

However, the work of Duhm and Mowinckel is also a product of its own time and cultural circumstance, including their personal theological and philosophical commitments. Perhaps for this reason, there has never been a satisfactory account in critical scholarship for the way in which the tradition has used Jehoiachin, both within Jeremiah, as well as in post-exilic rabbinic work, Josephus and the New Testament. The oracle is dismissed either as unfounded or based on conflicting sources for which later editors did not have, or suppressed, the opposing viewpoint. However, this assessment must now undergo serious reconsideration. Two scholars have noted how the figure of Jehoiachin, certainly one of Israel’s most unremarkable kings, begins to figure, along with other figures in Israel’s history, into the suffering servant motifs that develop from the fifth century BCE onward.¹

Jehoiachin appears to develop from unremarkable king to tragic sufferer to dramatic figure of grace and restoration, pointing forward to developing suffering servant motifs that would become important to later Jewish and Christian interpreters. Through a complex process of transmission involving the original oracles and ministry of Jeremiah, scribal work by Baruch, Seraiah and others, and additional post-exilic compilation and editing, king Jehoiachin entered into the living tradition of the post-exilic period. He continued to find life as the faith of Israel, in both its Jewish and later Christian streams, sought a hope and future in the Greco-Roman world.²

Precritical Rabbinic Approaches

Jeremy Schipper discusses how the rabbis saw an oath formula in the oracle and discussed the oracle as an oath that Yahweh subsequently annuls.³ In addition, rabbinic writers, perhaps following the exhortation of Kings, have predicated Jehoiachin’s blessings on his repentance. This appears in one rabbinic account of Jehoiachin who, while in prison, refused to sleep with his wife on a conjugal visit at Nebuchadnezzar’s invitation because she was menstruating (which would have violated Leviticus 15:25).⁴ According to this account, this was the repentance of Jehoiachin and thus the way for his

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³ “Early rabbinic exegetes often read the following verses as part of a divine oath. They understand the command to ‘record his man childless’ in v. 30 as a key component of this oath. Taking v. 30 as an oath and then explaining how YHWH actually has this oath annulled provides one strategy by which early rabbinic exegetes cope with Jeremiah’s announcement. To explain the oath’s annulment, they note other biblical passages with which the Jeremiah text seems to stand in tension and then reconcile the texts by further reflecting on Jehoiachin’s exile. In the Talmud, his exile atones for him, while in the midrashim it leads to his repentance.” Schipper, “‘Exile Atones for Everything’,” 485.

⁴ Ibid., 487.
restoration manifested. The idea of the repentance of Jehoiachin was not new. Indeed, it had already appeared in the Septuagint account. In the Septuagint, the book of Baruch immediately follows the end of Jeremiah. It reads:
Table 2: Jehoiachin’s Future in the Septuagint

| 31 Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ τριακοστῷ καὶ ἐβδόμῳ ἔτει ἄποικισθέντος τοῦ Ιωακιμ βασιλέως Ἰουδα καὶ τῇ τετράδι καὶ εἰκάδι τοῦ μηνὸς ἔλαβεν Οὐλαμαραδάχ βασιλέως Βαβυλῶνος ἐν τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ, ὥς ἔβασιλεύετε, τὴν κεφαλὴν Ιωακιμ βασιλέως Ἰουδα καὶ ἐξήγαγεν αὐτόν ἐπάνω τῶν θρόνων τῶν μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι… | 31 And it came to pass in the 37th year after Jehoiakim, king of Judah, had been sent away, in the 12th month, in the 24th day of the month, Evil-Merodach, king of Babylon, in the year in which he began to reign, took the head of Jehoiakim, king of Judah and led him out from the house in which he was imprisoned. 7 32 And he spoke kindly to him and he established his throne above the thrones of the kings who were in Babylon with him… |

BAROYX

1 Καὶ οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι τοῦ βιβλίου, οὓς ἔγραψε Βαρουχ υἱὸς Νηρίου υἱοῦ Μαασείας υἱοῦ Σεδεκίας υἱοῦ Ασαδίας υἱοῦ Χελκίας υἱοῦ Χελκίας 2 ἐν τῷ ἐν τῷ πέμπτῳ ἐν ἐβδόμῃ τοῦ μηνὸς ἔλαβον οἱ Χαλδαῖοι τὴν Ἰερουσαλῆμ καὶ ἐνέπρησαν αὐτὴν ἐν πυρί. 3 Καὶ ἄνεγνω Βαρουχ τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου ἐν ὡσὶν Ιεχονία υἱὸς Ιωακιμ βασιλέως Ἰουδα καὶ ἐν ὡσὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐν ὡσὶ τῶν μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἐπὶ ποταμοῦ Σουδ. 5 ἔκλαιον καὶ ἐνήστευον καὶ ἦχοντο στερεαί ἐναντίον κυρίου 5

1 And these are the words of the book which Baruch, son of Neriah, son of Maaseiah, son of Zedekiah, son of Hasadiah son of Hilkiah, wrote in Babylon, 2 in the fifth year on the seventh day of the month, in which the Chaldeans to Jerusalem and burned it with fire. 3 And Baruch read the words of this book in the ears of Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and in the ears of all the people who were brought to the book, 4 and in the ears of the powerful, and the sons of the kings and in the ears of the elders and in the ears of all the people from small to great, all those dwelling in Babylon upon the River Sud. 5 And they were weeping and fasting and praying before the Lord…11

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6 I take the aorist participle to be temporal.

7 This takes the middle as a passive. "Imprisoning himself" would not make sense.

8 χρήστος, which may be where Josephus derives the adjective that he uses in his account.

9 Here δίδωμι translates נתן in the Hebrew, and means “to establish.”

10 Tellingly, Baruch has no mention of the Davidic monarchy, the only deuteronomistic theme not in the book. Marko Marttila, “The Deuteronomistic Ideology and Phraseology in the Book of Baruch,” in
The phrase in verse 31, ἔλαβεν... κεφαλὴν (“…he took… the head…”) always means to behead someone in the LXX. Yet, followed by “led him out of the house where he was imprisoned,” it certainly means that he did not lose his head! Nevertheless, the language is suggestive and probably deliberate, creating a point of dramatic tension in the account: the reader expects Jehoiachin to come forth to execution, only to find that he comes forth to freedom. Morgenstern notes the Babylonian practice of atoning for offending kings:

“In the celebration of the Babylonian New Year’s Festival the king enacted the role of the dying and resurrected, supreme national deity, Marduk. In principle the king should accordingly have experienced death, even as it was thought that the god had died. It was, however, the regular practice to put to death in ritual manner, as the substitute for the king, a prisoner, presumably one who had previously been condemned to death for some grave crime, and who is now brought forth from prison for this role in the festival ritual. There is even good reason for believing that actually two prisoners were brought forth from prison, one to be put to death in the prescribed ritual manner and the other to be set free and ever thereafter to enjoy the royal favor. How it was decided which prisoner should be put to death and which one set free we have no way of knowing, but certainly the decision must have been made by some one in authority, a judge or a court perhaps or even possibly the king. These two prisoners were the substitutes for the king in the discharge of his role in the ritual of the New Year’s Festival. The one prisoner, he who was put to death, functioned as the replacement for the king in his role as the substitute for or representative of the dying god. The other prisoner, he who was freed from prison and enjoyed the king’s generous bounty ever thereafter, functioned as the replacement for the king in his role as the substitute for the god who gains his release from confinement in the netherworld, rises

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11 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

12 1 Sam. 17:13, 2 Sam 3:1, 2 Kin. 8:24, 1 Chr. 9:5, Job 29:6
majestically therefrom and achieves resurrection...”

Thus, in Jeremiah 52 seen in its Babylonian context, verse 32 comes as a great surprise and relief, and the ideal picture of repentance in Baruch follows, where the king as messenger of the prophet leads the nation in repentance along with its leaders and king, and they respond with weeping, fasting and prayer.

It is somewhat curious that rabbinic interpretation did not use this as evidence of Jehoiachin’s repentance. Given the timing of the event described in the book of Baruch, this would have happened before Jehoiachin’s rehabilitation, and before the restoration from exile, thus creating a plausible context for repentance that leads to kindness (χρηστός) shown at the end of Jeremiah. However, as Schipper has clearly demonstrated, the rabbis understood that:

1. either the experience of exile itself atoned for Jehoiachin’s sins,

   Said R. Yohanan, “Exile atones for everything, for it is said, ‘Thus says the Lord, Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah’ (Jer. 22:30). “After [the king] was exiled, it is written, ‘And the sons of Jechoniah, the same is Assir, Shealtiel, his son ... ’ (1 Chr. 3:17). [So he was not childless, and through exile he had atoned for his sins.]” (b. Sanh. 37B)

2. Alternatively, that Jehoiachin himself had repented, shown faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant and as a reward God had forgiven his sins and

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restored him.\textsuperscript{15}

A final option, which developed later in both Jewish and Christian interpretation (Jerome, Qimhi, Rashi), was that the names of the kings were codes for other kings, i.e.

“\ldots the kings mentioned here [22:10] were not (or were no longer) thought to refer to Josiah and Jehoahaz, but Shallum was interpreted as Jehoiachin or Zedekiah, with the dead king being seen as Jehoiakim.”\textsuperscript{16}

The important point for our purposes is that one must supply something from outside the text to solve the obvious problem created by the oracle vis-à-vis Jehoiachin’s subsequent treatment in chapter 52. This will become a common theme in many strategies for understanding the oracle. The change in approach by the rabbis resonates with the approach of Josephus.

\textbf{Josephus}

“Margaliyot remarks that the Bible says not a word that is positive about Jehoiachin, whereas the rabbinic tradition has only complimentary statements and not a single negative remark about him... Josephus parallels the rabbis in this change of attitude.”\textsuperscript{17}

One possible precedent for the rabbis’ rehabilitation of Jehoiachin after the exile could be found in the way Chronicles treats Manasseh, who is rehabilitated even before

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\textsuperscript{15} The legal principle appears in \textit{Num. R.} 20.20, and the specific instance of repentance appears in \textit{Lev. R.} 19.6. “\ldots at the very hour that God asks the heavenly court to absolve God of the vow, the Great Sanhedrin worries that the Davidic house would cease in their day, breaking the promise of an eternal dynasty in Ps. 89.37. Thus, they persuaded the Babylonian queen’s governess to ask the queen to convince Nebuchadnezzar to arrange a conjugal visit for Jehoiachin. Yet, when Nebuchadnezzar does so, Jehoiachin refuses to sleep with his wife because she is menstruating. Thus, he observes the purity laws recorded in \textit{Lev.} 15.25. According to the midrash, he did not do this when he lived in Jerusalem, thereby doing evil in the eyes of YHWH. God notes this change in behavior, pardons all his sins, and releases him from prison.” Schipper, “‘Exile Atones for Everything’,” 485.

\textsuperscript{16} Job, \textit{Jeremiah’s Kings}, 60.

his death (2 Chr. 33:12-16, 18-19).\textsuperscript{18} Yet as one can see from Feldman’s study, the story of Manasseh fades into insignificance and does not appear later exegesis, as the story of Jehoiachin does. Josephus gives fullest form to the rehabilitation of Jehoiachin in the ongoing narrative of the people of Israel in the new Greco-Roman world into which exile had cast them. He describes him as kind (\textit{χρηστός}) and just (\textit{δίκαιος}), words which seem the exact opposite of his portrayal in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. They are words that apply only to some of the most notable characters in the Old Testament. As we noted above, Josephus devotes considerably more space to Jehoiachin in the \textit{Antiquities} than any other king!\textsuperscript{19} Feldman speculates that this may be analogous to the way in which Zedekiah received forbearance in the post-canonical tradition since it blamed his poor advisors for his evil deeds.\textsuperscript{20}

However, in the evidence that Feldman adduces, another motive comes to mind: that Josephus was deliberately looking for ways to characterize what the canonical tradition understood to be the last king of Judah in ways that would resonate with Greco-Roman ideas of kingship then regnant. This is my conclusion, not Feldman’s, but it follows from Feldman’s observations:\textsuperscript{21}

1. Josephus’ primary audience was the non-Jewish world and his hope was that they would find his work worthy of attention.


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{19} Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Jehoiachin,” 13, 20–21.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 17.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{21} Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of Jehoiachin.”}
2. The adjectives used to describe Jehoiachin are the same used to describe the Persian king Xerxes and king Ptolemy Philometor of Egypt.  

3. At the rebuilding of the temple, one of its gates received the name of Jehoiachin, a change in perspective that resonates with the change in attitude toward Heracles and Odysseus, such as we find when we compare Homer and the Greek tragedies.

4. Justice (δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosune), one of the adjectives used to describe Jehoiachin in Josephus, is also the centerpiece of Plato’s Republic.

5. Even if Jehoiachin is being rehabilitated along the lines of Zedekiah (i.e., receiving forbearance because he was the victim of bad advice from his advisers), it is literally framed in such a way as to be reminiscent of Plato’s scene of the ship. There, the captain (the naïve people) listens to the sailors (the demagogues), rather than the navigator (the philosopher). Replace the philosopher with the prophet, and the analogy is complete.

For the interpreter, however, the theological reasons in the tradition for this shift in attitude are critical. Schipper has demonstrated how the form of the oracle includes an oath formula that Yahweh subsequently annuls. For the rabbis, this became the basis for a theory of atonement in the exile, indeed that exile becomes the means of atonement.

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22 It is, apparently, a necessary quality for kings. Antiochus Epiphanes laments the past days when he was known as χρηστός (1 Maccabees 6:11).

23 The persistence of this idea continued through the next four centuries, in Basil’s explanation of the problem between Saul and David. Vasiliki Limberis, “The Eyes Infected by Evil: Basil of Caesarea’s Homily, ‘On Envy’,” The Harvard Theological Review 84, no. 2 (April 1, 1991): 166.

24 Schipper, “‘Exile Atones for Everything’,” 485.
Significantly, atonement theories of the suffering king in exile became important for later Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Messiah, although Christian interpreters explicitly used this interpretation in reference to Jesus of Nazareth.

For the purposes of this paper, one notes especially the intersection between theories of atonement developed by the rabbis within the story of Israel, alongside Morgenstern’s theories of atonement ritual relating to the Babylonian king, of which Jehoiachin may have benefited. Whether or not either was dependent on the other, or both worked independently of each other, the explanation sought by the rabbis and Josephus both related to theories of atonement in exile.

**Pre-Critical Christian Interpretations**

Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers writing in the latter part of the second-century CE believed that the judgment oracle spoke proleptically against those who denied the virgin birth of Jesus.

“... if indeed He [Jesus] had been the son of Joseph, He could not, according to Jeremiah, be either king or heir. For Joseph is shown to be the son of Joachim and Jechoniah, as also Matthew sets forth in his pedigree. But Jechoniah, and all his posterity, were disinherit from the kingdom... Those, therefore, who say that He was begotten of Joseph, and that they have hope in Him, do cause themselves to be disinherit from the kingdom, falling under the curse and rebuke directed against Jechoniah and his seed.”

In other words, the importance of the oracle was to set the stage for the birth of the Messiah, whom Irenaeus identifies as Jesus of Nazareth.

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Hippolytus, another church father writing in the early third-century CE, believed that the words were prophetic also, but, following one of the strands of rabbinic interpretation, referred to the ignominious sufferings and death of Zedekiah.

“In his [Zedekiah’s] case is fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, saying, “(As) I live, saith the Lord, though Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah should become the signet upon my right hand…”

In this case, the reading strategy is to telescope the last two kings of Judah to maintain the integrity of the oracle in the final account in chapter 52.

Aquinas, in a possible twist on the rabbinic idea of oath-annulment, believed that the New Testament gospel had annulled the judgment-oracle against Jehoiachin.

“... it is written of Jechonias (Jer. 22:30): Write this man barren: ... for there shall not be a man of his seed that shall sit upon the throne of David. Whereas of Christ it is written (Isa. 9:7): He shall sit upon the throne of David. Therefore Christ was not of the seed of Jechonias: nor, consequently, of the family of David, since Matthew traces the genealogy from David through Jechonias. On the contrary, It is written (Rom. 1:3): Who was made to him of the seed of David according to the flesh.

John Calvin, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, believed that the name of address, Coniah, was a mutilated form to express contempt, as if he was not worthy of the complete name.

“...[they] were so fascinated as to think that, God was bound to them; and at the same time they allowed themselves every liberty in sinning, under the pretense that God had promised that the kingdom of David would remain as long as the sun and moon continued in the heavens, (Psalm 139:37) but they did not consider that there was a mutual compact in God’s covenant; for he required them to be faithful on their part: nor did


they consider that many were Abraham’s children according to the flesh, who were not his lawful children before God. As to the king himself, he never thought it possible that he should be driven into exile, because he was David’s successor and ordained by God... The word Coniah is, no doubt, in a mutilated form, instead of Jehoiachin. The Prophet then calls him Coniah by way of contempt, as though he did not think him worthy of the complete name, but expresses it in two instead of four syllables.²⁸

Here, again, we see that additional information is supplied – the internal pride of Jehoiachin, as well as the New Testament interpretation of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, as the foil against which the humbling process of Yahweh, symbolized by the shortened form of the name, reaches its fulfillment. Calvin’s grammatical suggestion continued to influence conservative Protestant interpreters even into the 20th century.

Matthew Henry, the 17th-century Presbyterian commentator, sees in the deletion of the ¹ (yod) at the beginning of the name, the deletion of the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, and thus a signal of the removal of divine favor.

“Some think it added to the honour of Abraham’s new name that a letter of the name Jehovah was inserted into it, as it was a disgrace to Jeconiah to have the first syllable of his name cut off, because it was the same as the first syllable of the sacred name...”²⁹

The early modern conservative scholar, Ernst W. Hengstenberg, took the deletion of the initial ¹ (yod) as indicative of the Hebrew imperfect:

“...the true Jehoiakim is, and remains, the Messiah, chap. 23:5. ... However, the case is different with regard to Jehoiachin. The first change of the name into Jeconiah has its cause not in itself; the two names have quite the same meaning; it had respect to the second change into Coniah only. In Jeconiah we have the Future; and this is put first, in order that, by cutting off the ¹, the sign of the Future, he might cut off hope; a Jeconiah


without the says only God establishes, but not that He will establish."\(^{30}\)

Calvin sums up this moralizing approach in his prayer at the end of his lecture on
this passage:

*Grant, Almighty God, that as it has pleased thee to perpetuate the memory
of the dreadful vengeance which thou hast executed on the descendants of
David, so that we may learn by their evils carefully to walk before thee, —
O grant, that the forgetfulness of this example may never possess us, but
that we may assiduously meditate on what is set before us...*\(^{31}\)

No matter the theological or religious orientation of scholars, there is a similar
pattern of interpretation. The rabbis looked for an additional instance of repentance and
covenant-faithfulness on Jehoiachin’s part. Early church fathers either telescoped
passages or discovered a typological reading foretelling Jesus’ virgin birth. Protestant
interpreters read hermeneutical significance into changes in the text.\(^{32}\) In fact, most pre-
critical interpreters and post-critical conservative commentators such as Hengstenberg
tend toward a harmonizing interpretation, which either supplies theological meaning from
grammatical details or imports the condemnations of Kings and Chronicles as the reasons
for the harsh judgment against Jehoiachin. In many cases, interpreters sense a need to
supply a reason that is not in the text, either for judgment, or for restoration in chapter 52,
or both.

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\(^{30}\) Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the


\(^{32}\) It was precisely this problem, perhaps exemplified best in Hengstenberg among the authors we
cite, that led James Barr to write his groundbreaking work debunking much of the theologizing on minute
grammatical details in the Biblical Theology movement of later critical Protestantism. James Barr, *The
The problem, of course, to this harmonizing interpretation is that those reasons do not appear in the oracle against Jehoiachin. Indeed, they do not appear in the entire canonical text of Jeremiah, which clearly bears the marks of Deuteronomistic editing just as Kings and Chronicles, where his evils do appear although only in formulaic fashion. All the kings from the King Collection who received condemnation in Kings and Chronicles also receive accusations of covenant breaking in Jeremiah, except for Jehoiachin.

Martin Luther presents one striking exception to pre-critical interpretations of Jehoiachin. Strikingly similar to Josephus, throughout Luther every reference to Jehoiachin is always a reference to the grace of God to save the king, regardless of his character, and thus gives hope to the people as well. If nothing else, this divergence within the pre-critical tradition, even though weighted on one side, testifies to the conflicting messages that surround the oracle against Jehoiachin.

There are profound shifts in methodology with the rise of critical scholarship – but perhaps by now it will not be surprising to find similar hermeneutical concerns pushed toward the text, although this time in a different direction.


Laying a Critical Foundation

While most of our work is concerned with Bernhard Duhm and those who followed his example, a brief look at the rise of critical scholarship is in order. Here, one of the critical events recorded in the Bible around which this theory arose was the discovery of the “book of the law” recorded in 2 Kings 22, which led to the reform of Josiah. Julius Wellhausen believed that someone produced this work on the spot as the book of Deuteronomy.\footnote{Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomenon to the History of Israel: With a Reprint of the Article Israel from the “Encyclopaedia Britannica,”* ed. William Robertson Smith, trans. John Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 248, 268, 402. This is the oft-recited "pious fraud" account, although it appears in Wellhausen as "pious caricature" or "pious creation."} An incident bearing similarity to this account appears in Jeremiah 36, where Jeremiah’s scribe confronts the current king, Jehoiakim, with the prophetic word of Jeremiah written on the scroll, Baruch. In this case, though, the results are far different, as the writings receive a poor reception, destroyed by the king. Chapter 36 in Jeremiah, more than any other place in the book, draws attention to its own writtenness, and the process by which it received its final form.

The idea of sources used by the biblical writers was not new. In the 16th century, Hobbes and Spinoza had compiled lists of what they believed the sources were, and claimed that Moses had written the Pentateuch (even though this claim never appears in the Bible). In the 18th century, Jean Astruc began the task of attempting to separate out the sources that Moses used, dividing them into four sources and arranging them in columns, as he believed Moses had originally written it, as a way to mirror the four Gospels of the New Testament.\footnote{Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Spirit and the Word: Prophecy and Tradition in Ancient Israel,* ed. K. C. Hanson, Fortress Classics in Biblical Studies (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 3. Further, the idea of
editorial activity in, for example, the process given in the book of Jeremiah in chapter 36 that we noted previously. This scroll was then destroyed and rewritten, to which “… were added many similar words.” (36:37).

Chapter 51 ends (יִרְמְיָֽהוּ דִּבְרֵ֥י עַד־הֵ֖נָּה, 'ad-hênnâ dibôre yirômâyâû = thus far, the words/matters of Jeremiah) with an inclusio with the beginning of chapter 1 (ְיִרְמְיָ֖הוּ דִּבְרֵ֥י). Yet chapter 52 appears without explanation as a historical comment by an unnamed editor, with obvious resonances with the end of 2 Kings. In addition, Hebrew and Greek versions of the book of Jeremiah vary considerably in length and in order, and, Duhm believed, differ in the identity of the king who ended the book! A number of theories appeared to explain this, but the most plausible seems to be that of Jack Lundbom:

“The present book of Jeremiah is really a “book of books.” Though we may speak about oral composition and oral transmission for poetry within 1–20, 21–23, 30–31, and 46–51, the various collections and the completed book are written documents behind which stand Baruch, Seraiah, and other scribes who shared in the work. Jeremiah himself had a hand in the writing process (51:60)... The first book corresponding roughly to chaps. 1–51 was Baruch’s compilation... This book survives in the LXX version and in 4Q Jerb (though the latter is but a small fragment of it). Its provenance is Egypt where Baruch and Jeremiah were taken after 586 B.C. (43:5–7). Another book corresponding roughly to chaps. 1–51 was completed in Babylon... This book survives in the fragments 4Q Jera and 4Q Jerc and in the MT. Seraiah, who went to Babylon in 594/3 and could have been exiled there ultimately, is possibly the compiler... Two books then were completed in Egypt and Babylon respectively after the fall of Jerusalem, at roughly the same time the Deuteronomistic work was completed” 39

literary criticism is not a new one, as Mowinckel pointed out, pointing to Tatian’s Diatessaron as the prime example. Ibid., 16.

37 Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, 347.

38 Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, ix. We will take issue with this interpretation of Duhm’s in ch. 3.

39 Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of,” 716. This theory has generally held up well. For a supporting argument and helpful updating, see Leuchter, The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45, 13.
Another possible factor connects the rise of critical scholarship specifically with scholarship on the construction of Jeremiah. In 1954, George Mendenhall first advanced the theory that the book of Deuteronomy and other parts of the Pentateuch appeared to have similarities with the Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties. If, in fact, the “book of the law” described in 2 Kings 22 was either a portion or the entirety of the book of Deuteronomy, as most scholars now believe, then the document would rightly have been perceived by the Babylonians as a land-grant treaty. The total destruction of the temple would have meant the destruction of whatever literary archive Israel had available to them at that point in Jerusalem. Given the prevalent belief that Jerusalem would not be overrun because of the covenant with David, it is unlikely that provisions would have been made for safe removal of literary and cultic objects, as can be seen in Nebuchadnezzar’s carrying away of the temple articles (2 Kings 25:7-18, and Jeremiah 52). Some form of the book of Deuteronomy would have been in existence at the time Nebuchadnezzar’s generals entered the sacred precincts.

Several scholars have noted the significance and importance of military aggression as a characteristic mode of judgment by ancient near Eastern deities. Thus, it makes sense that, since both Babylonian and Israelite records describe the total devastation of the temple, Nebuchadnezzar’s generals, had they found the covenant

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documents, would have recognized them as suzerain-vassal documents and promptly destroyed them. Nebuchadnezzar, enjoying the fruits of his victory at Carchemish over Pharaoh Neco II, and on his way to becoming undisputed suzerain, would have made certain to destroy any documents that appeared to give Israel title to the land under some other suzerain, even their God. Thus, after the exile, scholars and scribes would have to re-create the writings from whatever sources they had available to them.

Therefore, the recovery project of critical scholarship sought to peer behind the scribally reconstructed text in search of its prehistory. One way to do this was to use categories developed by romantic theories of great literature and attempt by means of source-critical theory to identify the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet, a project still alive today in Jeremiah research.\(^{42}\) The preferred critical standard was one of literary style, by which separate sources belonged to various periods in tradition history. Early on, the concern of most scholars was to determine what was “authentic” and what was “inauthentic.” The first one to apply this framework for the study of Jeremiah was Bernhard Duhm at the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century.

**Duhm and His Legacy**

Bernhard Duhm, a “disciple and comrade-in-arms” of Wellhausen, postulated three sources for the contents of the canonical book of Jeremiah: the actual words of the prophet, poetry (source A); the words of his scribe, Baruch (source B), which were

reliably biographical; and the words of later editors or redactors (source C.). In Duhm’s opinion, Baruch

“…war kein grosser Geist und kein glänzender Schriftsteller; er ist eine biedere, ehrliche Seele und erzählt das von ihm erlebte mit liebevoller Versenkung in die kleinsten Details ...und in zuverlässiger Weise.” (He was not a great spirit nor a brilliant writer, but was a sincere, honest soul, and told of his own experiences with loving immersion in the smallest details ... and in a reliable manner.)

While Duhm’s work is certainly dated, his framework often remains intact without much critical review. In his seminal work, Das Buch Jeremia, he says:

Aber für mich bedeutet es die Befreiung von einem Albdruck; ich glaube jetzt den Jeremia als Menschen, Schriftsteller und Propheten verstehen zu können, soweit man sich anmassen darf, das von einem so grossen Mann zu sagen. (However, for me it [his literary-critical method] meant liberation from a nightmare; I think I understand now, the Jeremiah, as people, writers and prophets can [understand him], as far as one may presume to say that about such a great man.)

Yet Duhm remained puzzled because

“Das Buch … wie ein unbeaufsichtigter Wald wächst und sich ausbreitet (The book … like an unattended forest, grows and spreads itself …)”

He expressed confusion over the fact that the book contained

“…die allerherrlichsten prophetischen Dichtungen und zugleich Stücke von recht geringer Qualität. (... the most glorious prophetic poems as well as pieces of rather low quality...)


44 Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, xv. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the German are mine.


46 Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, vii.

47 Ibid., xx.
And

“...einen anscheinend bedeutenden Gedankengehalt mit einer merkwürdig ungeschickten Form verbanden... (an apparently significant thought content associated with a remarkably clumsy form...).”

What does this mean for Duhm’s interpretation of the oracle against Jehoiachin?

Most of the text is removed as “inauthentic,” or, at best a mixture of authentic and inauthentic (echt and unecht) based on literary style. Even though he acknowledged that Baruch, whom he regards as reliable, if somewhat boring, was probably the one who merged the original Jeremianic poems together, such as we see in 22:24-27, 28-30, he regards only verses 24 and 28 as genuine. Verse 25 is a later addition which is not worthy of the style of a great man like Jeremiah. One can see this process at work, though without explanation of its grounding, in this passage

“Dass 25 Zusatz ist, bedarf für den, der etwas Stilgefühl hat, keiner weiteren Begründung. Wie hätte sich ein Jeremia den Effekt so verderben können! ... Der ganze Zusatz v. 25-27 wirkt um so unangenehmer... (That 25 is an addition, needs, for the one who has some sense of style, no further explanation. How could one so spoil the effect of Jeremiah!... The entire addition of v. 25-27 works as disagreeably...)”

If one does not agree with Duhm, apparently, one has no sense of style! Verses 29-30 are a matter of pure indifference to Jeremiah, who, according to Duhm, believed that the entire matter of Jehoiachin ended when he went into captivity. They were words that would only interest the curious, a cheap prediction after the fact. Thus, for

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48 Ibid., vii.

49 Ibid., xiii, 179–180.

50 Ibid., 179.

51 Ibid., 180.

Duhm, evaluating literary style became the way to separate the true words of the prophet from his reliable, if somewhat boring, interpreter Baruch, and later editors and redactors.

However, nowhere does he tell us his standard for judging literary style. One could assume that Duhm and his audience shared a common understanding of what constituted good literary style – that which was acceptable to educated European elites in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, he published another book in which one may deduce his criteria for style, *The Ever-Coming Kingdom of God*. In that book, he makes the following statements:

“... it was a very simple ideal that the Prophets represented. ... the Prophets’ ideal was for this life, and God Himself belonged to this life, although of course to the invisible part of it... a people or community, and not an individual indivisible spirit, was the fountain which brought forth the very highest ideas that were ever attained in the Biblical religion...”

“Christianity is a will and not a doctrine.”

“... One Will can stand behind it all... the creative power of man lies today in ...the power to will, ... in the great sense of human solidarity, ... in the power to feel the working soul of the world.”

This, of course, is vintage Hegel and Nietzsche, and Duhm wants to take us to Jesus as the (purely human) one who represents the final Synthesis. Jesus repristinates

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53 Ironically, in his analysis of scholarly work on the LXX and the MT, he criticizes the efforts of other scholars: “... aber ein annnehmbares Resultat und für die Kritik verwendbare Regeln hat sie nicht geliefert. (... they have not supplied an acceptable result nor usable rules for criticism.)” Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, xxii.


55 Ibid., 9.

56 Ibid., 70.

57 In this regard, he represents a practical Arianism. Arius taught that Jesus was “...not God by nature, but a creature...” F. L Cross and Elizabeth A Livingstone, eds., “Arianism,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
and updates the older prophetic style of Jeremiah which had been eclipsed by Ezekiel and his scribes.\textsuperscript{58} For Duhm, Jeremiah’s spirit is that which asserts its dominance in the name of Yahweh, using the emblems of the signet ring and the vessel in the oracle against Jehoiachin, both symbolic actions of royal power in ancient near East, as the markers of his authentic words.\textsuperscript{59} It could appear problematic that Duhm has not revealed to his readers his straightforward appropriation of Hegel and Nietzsche into Christian theology. However, that would be to misunderstand the \textit{Zeitgeist} of his time,

> “It is a commonplace that Nietzsche and his disciples were key contributors to a fundamental crisis of Christian faith in Europe from the nineteenth century onward. No one, however, has as yet charted the complex ways in which generations of Nietzscheans simultaneously sought to surmount the crisis by redirecting and regenerating the religious impulse rather than obliterating it...Some basic elements made up most Nietzschean religions. All fostered a humanist Nietzschean universe of volunteerism, will, vitalism, myth, and heroism. All sought to disseminate to different Christian or post-Christian constituencies a regenerative sensibility in which Nietzsche was the central presence. The dissemination began in a startling way. The escapades of Nietzschean religion in Germany began as a force within the faith, seeking to revitalize not to destroy Christianity!” \textsuperscript{60}

The use of religious myth as a reaction against Christianity was not new, having been a tactic of Julian’s in his polemic against the Christians.\textsuperscript{61} Moreover, just as with Julian, the idea of myth served the purposes of empire.

\textsuperscript{58} Duhm, \textit{The Ever-Coming Kingdom of God; a Discussion on Religious Progress}, 43–47.


\textsuperscript{60} Steven E Aschheim, \textit{The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 201.

Thus, we find that for Duhm, the measure of literary style is that which corresponds to a Nietzschean view of the world. In no way does this invalidate his literary insights into the text. Nevertheless, it does mean that, since he began the discussion on style, we must be careful in later scholarship that whenever discussions of style arise, we are not also importing Duhm’s ideological and theological presuppositions. An excellent example of how to appropriate Duhm’s insights without necessarily importing his presuppositions appears in Carolyn Sharp. One can also see a sympathetic updating of Duhm in Hans-Jürgen Hermisson’s reconfiguring of the three categories of texts:

“Demnach hatten wir in unserem Text drei Schichten zu unterscheiden, die noch ihre Spuren hinterliessen: Erstens das verkundete Wort des Propheten, das in der Anrede an Jojachin verfasst war; zweitens die Überlieferungsgestalt, in der der Übergang zum Bericht von einem Jahwe-Wort und die Information über den Adressaten in den Spruch hineingezogen war; schliesslich drittens die kommentierende Bearbeitung des Spruches durch den dtr. Prosatext, der sieh durchaus seiner Vorlage am Anfang wie am Ende anzupassen suchte. (Accordingly, we have to distinguish three layers in our text, which have still left their traces: first the preached word of the prophets, which was written as an address to Jehoiachin; second the traditional figure, in which was brought in the transition to a report of a word from Yahweh and information about the addressee in the saying, finally, thirdly, the commentary work of the saying through the Deuteronomistic prose text which sought throughout to bring it into line from beginning to end with its model.)”

This finessing of Duhm will become important below.63

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Mowinckel and His Legacy

If Duhm represents the Nietzsche of biblical studies in Jeremiah, then his counterpart and successor is the Kierkegaard of biblical studies, Sigmund Mowinckel, who emphasized the existential experience of the word as he imagined the prophet would have experienced. Building on Duhm, Mowinckel added a fourth source, D, an additional source of later redactions.64 Further, Mowinckel added redactors for each particular source, thus increasing to at least eight the number of hands involved in the production of the text.65 This is an important progression – the more literary-critical studies progressed, the more they tended to see differences that in turn pointed to different sources.66 Mowinckel, as his thought progressed, became more aware of this danger of scholarship dissolving into an endless process of source-division so that one could never understand the developed tradition.67

Still, in one important way, Mowinckel carried forward and modified Duhm’s legacy: he believed in the primacy of the oral tradition as carried by the charismatic,

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65 He explains the purpose of the redactors: “Der erste Redaktor wird die Orakel möglichst im Wortlaut beibehalten können; der zweite wird aus ihnen Visionen gestalten, während der dritte mit literarischen Reden hervortritt. (The first editor of the oracles was probably most able to maintain the wording; the second shaped them into visions, while the third made the literary addresses stand out.)” Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*, 18.

66 He did, however, point out that it was increasingly difficult to identify different sources by literary criticism the further one removed from the chronological time of the prophet, and that the purpose of source identification was not to determine “authentic” versus “inauthentic,” but rather to discern earlier versus later additions to the text. Mowinckel, *The Old Testament as Word of God*, 111.

ecstatic prophet. This idea probably originated from some ideas of New Testament prophecy, but as Schniedewind observes in the debate between David Aune and E. E. Ellis on this issue, this does not appear to be a reliable picture of New Testament prophets and prophecy. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition*, 244–245.

69 It is a project still firmly in place in the works of Richard Rorty and Harold Bloom, among others. O’Hara, *Radical Parody*, 152, 158, 162.


submerged. How, then, could Mowinckel detect when the actual prophet was at work, versus his later redactors? Again, as with Duhm, the critical consideration is literary style. Here, Mowinckel gives us musical metaphors:

“Sometimes the voice of the prophet sounds like a powerful leading melody, at other times like a deep undertone in the course of the tradition, and at others more subdued, flooded by the multi-stringed accompaniment of tradition. We will attempt to ascertain their words, get hold of the original settings, approximately as they once sounded in the streets and marketplaces of Jerusalem and by the gates of the temple.”

Remembering Nietzsche’s interest in music and myth, one hears the powerful influence of Wagner and Nietzsche. Yet, it is as if Mowinckel wishes to hear the violin solo without the rest of the orchestra. It is as if there was no composer standing behind the work who does not appear on stage, who designed the parts to work together in both their dissonance and harmonies. The word of God and the word of man maintain their separate identities in the canonical text. It is true that for Mowinckel the traditioning process turned the canonical text into a Gordian knot that no one can now untie. Yet traditioning and canonization for Mowinckel also represent the final stage of any religious tradition prior to its demise, the last stop before death. All that remains for Mowinckel is to attempt an extraction in the hopes of gleaning a few words of God in the canonical book of Jeremiah. The founder of form criticism and a contemporary of Mowinckel’s, Herrmann Gunkel, goes so far as to say:

72 Mowinckel, *The Spirit and the Word*, 83–99. He continually refers to the “older nebi’ism” (88) yet never adduces a single example! In fact, Levinson argues that the canon itself was actually the engine of hermeneutical innovation. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel*, 93–94.


74 Ibid., 13.
“If contemporary readers wish to understand the prophets, they must entirely forget that the writings were collected in the sacred books centuries after the prophets’ work. The contemporary reader must not read their words as portions of the Bible but must attempt to place them in the context of the life of the people of Israel in which they were first spoken.”

How, then, does this affect his understanding of the oracle against Jehoiachin?

First, the entire section of 21:11-22:30 represents the hand of the redactor of source A (thus closer to the *ipsissima verba* of Jeremiah). He identifies, against Duhm, 22:24-30 as entirely of source A. For Mowinckel this means that this oracle represents the original, or at least nearly original, ecstatic speech of the prophet. The prophet had lost control of himself under the influence of the spirit of God, even though the first part of the oracle, 22:24-27, is prose, not poetry.

However, serious questions remain. Is Mowinckel’s idea of “inspiration” helpful in understanding the text? Mowinckel seems to identify “inspiration” as that which happens in the psychological interior of the prophet, as opposed to what he calls a mechanical dictation theory of inspiration. He sometimes refers to this latter as the


76 Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*, 20, 22. However, elsewhere he identifies chapter 21 as source C – and this is not a good thing! Ibid., 52. “... C ist im großen ganzen nur eine Quelle dritten Ranges. (C on the whole, is only a third-rate source.)” Ibid., 64. Hermisson corrects this negative impression: “Am Schluß muß aber noch einmal von dem dtr. Redaktor und Kommentator die Rede sein, dessen Anteil in der Analyse immer nur als etwas Auszuschaltendes erschien. Man sollte ihn nicht an der sprachlichen Gewalt eines Jeremia messen, sondern an der Aufgabe, die ihm zukam. Es ist zuerst die große und bescheidene Aufgabe, das Prophetenwort zu bewahren: ohne ihn hatten wir es nicht. Er ist dabei sehr behutsam mit der Tradition umgegangen. (In the end, one must make mention once again of the Deuteronomic redactor and commentator, whose part in the analysis seems always to be only as something to be separated off. He should not be measured according to the linguistic power of a Jeremiah, but rather on the task that he was given. It is first a great and humble task to preserve the word of the prophet: without him we would have nothing. He has very carefully dealt with the tradition.)” Hermisson, “Jeremias Wort über Jojachin,” 269.

“verbal, plenary inspiration” theory or sometimes just the “verbal inspiration” theory. In any case, it does not seem to bear much resemblance to such theories of inspiration, at least as explicated by their ablest exponents. Moises Silva observed how discussions of “inerrancy” received careful nuance in the days of old Princeton, especially as formulated by B. B. Warfield. He goes on to quote in his article Warfield and A. A. Hodge as reflecting a view of inerrancy which includes acknowledgment of the human authors’ limitations of knowledge, personal defects, “indelible traces of error”, dependence upon fallible sources and methods, and personal knowledge and judgments that were in many matters hesitating, defective, or even wrong.78

Mowinckel’s caricature appears in the following statement

“... the ‘theory of verbal inspiration,’ ... was applied to the Old and New Testaments without differentiation. The Scripture was created by divine inspiration that had the character of direct divine dictation. The Holy Spirit told the authors both the content and the form of that which they wrote. Scripture therefore, it was held, was ‘infallible’ even in the externals and down to the smallest details. It contained historical, geographical, botanical, zoological, and metaphysical ‘information about reality,’ as if for the sake of this information itself.”79

Here, Mowinckel brilliantly misunderstands – or radically reinterprets – the theory of verbal inspiration to mean an inspiration attached to the verbal actions of the prophet as opposed to his mystic, ecstatic, non-verbal experience. Verbal inspiration only


79 Mowinckel, The Old Testament as Word of God, 11–12.
affirms that, whatever the historical processes by which the canonical text appeared, that final form became the normative canon for the church. In other words, the final form of the text is inspired, not the sources, the liturgical setting of ancient Israel, the author(s), editor(s), redactor(s), tradent(s), or the process of textualization itself. Brevard Childs worried about the persistent tendency of preachers to over-psychologize Jeremiah.80 It seems likely that if they are guilty of this they learned it from Mowinckel!

Further, while Mowinckel has no desire to attempt to separate out genuine from spurious words in the canonical book of Jeremiah, it nevertheless remains true that he believes that it is an inseparable mingling of divine word and human word, of which the only value lies in the divine part. Although it gives him a higher view of portions of the text as scripture than, for example Wellhausen or Duhm, yet it is analogous to Nestorianism in the inability to affirm the full interplay of divine and human in the production of the text.81 The important point here is that Mowinckel, while by now separated from the search for myth in modern Germany that created the cultural climate in which Duhm operated, has adopted a similar reading strategy, valorizing some portions of the text and dispensing with others. Having dispensed with the need for romantic notions of poetry as the core of cultural mythmaking, he now uses the same category in

80 Childs, Old Testament Books for Pastor and Teacher, 76. Brevard Childs worried about the persistent tendency of preachers to over-psychologize Jeremiah. It seems likely that if they are guilty of this they learned it from Mowinckel!

81 “...[Nestorius’s] zeal for upholding the integrity of the two natures, which he believed to be both self-subsisting and therefore incapable of being physically united in the Person of the God-man, caused him to fall into unguarded language, and the fact that his own friends finally abandoned him supports the view that, by trying to defend, he actually compromised the Antiochene Christology.” F. L Cross and Elizabeth A Livingstone, eds., “Nestorius,” The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
support of the new Protestant doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Although the theological topics are different, the same categories, methods and results are in place.

Finally, Mowinckel focuses on the Gattungen, the various genuses to which texts belong. He was not the first to refer to the Gattungen of biblical texts, but his use of this typology from evolutionary biology, in concert with his view of inspiration, is troublesome, for he stands the theory of evolution on its head. In evolutionary theory, the progression generally runs from simplicity to complexity, and follows the “life principle,” which moves from non-life to life, then greater and more complex forms of life. Mowinckel’s theory is more a devolutionary theory in which the final product represents the death of the religion, rather than a continuing and expanding life. This has profound negative implications for how he views the post-Jeremiah phase of the text’s development.

Since variations in style and discourse now demanded explanation by various sources in different historical circumstances, the number of possible hands on the text begins to multiply exceedingly. Some later interpreters, such as William McKane, began to argue for the elimination of some sources (e.g., C) as being more hindrance than

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82 Hayes' comments are important here: "Instead of charting an evolution, or rather degeneration, of Israelite religion from JE and D to P as in classical source critical theory, many scholars prefer to see three distinct and roughly contemporaneous strands of ancient Israelite tradition, transmitted and developed over centuries and crystallizing into final form at various times. Thus we may hypothesize as follows: JE has fragments that are quite old and reached its final form before the centralization of the cult in 622, D contains Northern traditions from before 722 that were propounded in late-seventh-century Judah but reached a final redacted form in the exile, and P likewise contains older traditions that reached their full and final redacted form in the exilic or postexilic period. Each of these complex, multilayered sources possesses its own emphases, agenda, and perspectives that at times complement and at times challenge one another but are not best seen as steps in a linear progression. Their diversity has not been flattened or homogenized by a final editor but preserved in a manner that stimulates reflection and debate." Hayes, Introduction to the Bible, 164.
help.\(^{83}\) Thus, in Jeremiah studies, source-criticism gave way to form criticism, then redaction-criticism.\(^{84}\) As the process progressed, the person of Jeremiah receded nearly out of view. In turn, other scholars have focused their efforts on understanding the book as a literary unit, effectively abandoning the attempt to find the “historical” prophet.\(^{85}\) Their reasons are simple: reliable historical-critical reconstruction is quite difficult and even in the most skillful hands often remains speculative:

> While both the historical-critical and literary approaches both [sic] begin with the world of the text, they end up at different points. Beginning with the world of the text, critics using the historical-critical method have identified in the book of Jeremiah the presence of different literary styles, the lack of any organizing principle and chronological disorder in the arrangement of many chapters. Having catalogued these, they moved to an analysis of the world behind the texts to explain the difficulties with the book’s present form. Such a process has meant that the interpretive possibilities offered by a fuller and more extensive analysis of the world of the text are not always explored.\(^{86}\)

This has led to some attempts to bridge the gap between synchronic and diachronic readings.\(^{87}\) Some scholars now appear to be using methodology unsettlingly...


\(^{84}\) Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 12.


\(^{86}\) Hill, *Friend of Foe?*, 40:11.

similar to that adopted by narrow theological concerns.\textsuperscript{88} Other scholars are once again focusing on the canonical shape of the book, in contrast to the dissecting approach of the 19\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{89}

Nevertheless, despite these divergences within recent critical scholarship, the process has profited much. We now have a vast increase in the sense of the historical depth of the particular text, which in turn opens new areas for meaning.\textsuperscript{90}

Moreover, the problem of enlightenment-based approaches to biblical literature is now well known. Brevard Childs and others have pointed to these and other theological and philosophical problems that continue to dog critical study of the Bible, in which no real value can be found in the traditionary material that accompanies the words of the prophet.\textsuperscript{91} Historical-critical research has never been able to find a way around the impasse; the final form of the text is merely something to peel off. From the standpoint of the tradition, this peeling back in fact is the deathblow!\textsuperscript{92} From the standpoint of the tradition (to use another analogy from evolution): is one to flay a corpse in hopes of finding a primordial hominid inside?

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{88}{Mark Leuchter, \textit{Josiah’s Reform and Jeremiah’s Scroll: Historical Calamity and Prophetic Response}, vol. 6, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006), 5–6.}
\footnote{89}{“... attention must be paid to the development of a canonical perspective \textit{pari passu} with the growth of Jeremiah.” Job, \textit{Jeremiah’s Kings}, 52.}
\footnote{90}{Hartmut Gese, \textit{Alttestamentliche Studien} (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 259; Job, \textit{Jeremiah’s Kings}, 179.}
\footnote{91}{Childs, \textit{Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture}, 353.}
\footnote{92}{Ibid., 346.}
\end{footnotes}
The presuppositions with which one engages the text shape and influence what one concludes from it. For Gunkel, Duhm and Mowinckel, one cannot avoid privileging some words in the canonical books over others, or valorizing the psychology of the prophet over the text attributed to him. At the root of the problem is the theological issue of the new Protestant confessionalism’s view of religious progress and biblical inspiration. It does not know how to account for textual development over time, and finds itself continually worried about “copyright infringement” and “plagiarism,” anachronistic terms that only become meaningful after the invention of the printing press. Then books became commodities, whereas previously they were community property. By erecting the straw man of the mechanical dictation view of inspiration, Mowinckel focused on views of inspiration that centered on the human psychology of the prophet in one way or another. Ironically, the classical view of inspiration that specifically accounts for traditionary development is better suited to the development of the textual tradition than is a psychological one. As Hermisson observed:

“Die Komposition war der Anfang eines Überlieferungsprozesses, sofern

93 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 3.


95 Ibid., 159, 240–241. For a succinct criticism of these concerns, see Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 537; Najman, Seconding Sinai, 6–20. For a helpful distinction between “author” and “writer,” see Ibid., 65.

96 Or, in the words of Christopher Seitz, “The very notion of a canonical process assumes a doctrine of inspiration that spills out from the prophetic word once delivered, as God superintends that word toward his own accomplishing end.” Seitz, Prophecy and Hermeneutics, 240–241. That this theological innovation was unnecessary is evident in the ease with which orthodox puritan commentators, such as Matthew Poole and Matthew Henry, could easily embrace the idea of multiple sources for Biblical books, anonymous authors and textual irregularities. Muller, Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics 2, 2:144.
schon beim Propheten das früher ergangene Jahwewort in einer Sekundarverwendung erscheint. Dabei kann es sich nur vordergründig darum handeln, dass der Prophet mit der Wiederaufnahme des früheren Unheilsworts nachweisen kann, dass er Recht behalten hat; es ging ja nicht nur einen äusseren Ausweis, sondern nur Bekraftigung und Verstärkung derselben Unheilsansage. Dieser Aktualisierungs- und Überlieferungsprozess ist dann über seinen erst en Anlass hinaus weitergegangen, zunächst in der Bewahrung der in solcher Komposition fixierten Botschaft. Ob Jeremia diesen Text aufschrieb und so ein "Dokument" weitergegeben wurde, kann man nur raten – es spricht aber nichts dagegen; jedenfalls hatten die dtr. Bearbeiter schon einen schriftlichen Text vorzuliegen, und andererseits werden mtündliche und schriftliche Überlieferung wohl lange nebeneinander hergelaufen sein: man hatte die Texte, aber man konnte sie auch auswendig. (The composition was the beginning of a tradition process, provided that the previously-sent word of Yahweh by the prophet appears in its secondary use...This updating and traditioning process then continued... initially in the preservation of the message fixed in such a composition. Whether Jeremiah wrote down the text and passed on such a ‘document,’ one can only guess – but can say nothing against it; in any event, the Deuteronomic editor already had a written text lying before him, as well as other verbal and written tradition next to each other well before, which preceded it; one had the text, but one also knew it by heart."

William McKane represents at once the antithesis and the telos of Mowinckel’s views on inspiration. He holds an a priori theological presupposition as the foundation of his commentary without any rationale attached. God speaks not at all: “...All language is human language and God does not speak...” It is problematic, however, to deny the very literary standpoint to the post-exilic community that could provide a rational explanation for the canonical portrayal of Jeremiah and Jehoiachin, in favor of a non-

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97 Hermisson, “Jeremias Wort über Jojachin,” 266. In the words of one of the most-developed Protestant doctrines of inspiration (cf. Muller, Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics 2, 2:87.): “...it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manner, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards...to commit the same wholly unto writing...” The Westminster Confession of Faith, CD-ROM (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996), chap. 1.1, 8. In fact, recovering a Protestant view of inspiration may be one of the most critical parts Protestantism can play in Biblical studies. For a helpful, succinct description of Protestantism’s unique exegetical approach to the Bible in contrast to other positions, see Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 2.

98 McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, 1:xcix.
rational explanation based on the commentator’s personal religious beliefs! We noted
Luther’s acknowledgement of how frustrating reading the prophets can be. His caution is
here illuminating: “…As the saying goes: He who cannot hear well invents well.”

Foucault and the Rise of Modernity

Here one confronts again, in the most unexpected place, the problem of
theological bias, found in the new German Protestant confessionalism of the late 19th
century. David Strauss first put forward the theological problem, and Michel Foucault
identified it recently as the turning point in modernity. This is specifically the loss of the
theology of the cross as a hermeneutical lens in Western scholarship, beginning in the
17th century and continuing to the present. This is the very problem that Foucault sees
as lying in the transition point between the classical age and the modern age.

99 Luther, Lectures on the Minor Prophets II, 19:152.

100 Foucault, History of Madness, 152–155.

101 Foucault's painstaking tracing out of the classical age is strikingly different from his treatment
of the late 18th-century forward. Foucault, raised as a Protestant, retained some of the sensibilities of
classical Reformation Protestantism prior to its radical redefinition by primarily German theologians in the
18th and 19th centuries. Although he occasionally betrays an over-dependence on Max Weber's debatable
views of a secularized Calvinism, (Ibid., 55, 70.), he refers to Paul, Luther and Calvin several times as
those who believe in the "madness" or foolishness of the gospel in an effort to explain his position. See also
page 55 where he makes a simple confusion of individual judgment and corporate judgment in the writings
of Calvin. Ibid., 29, 30, 152–155. In fact, the rise of the 18th century institutions and understandings
marked the historically constructed boundaries of madness for the modern period. At this time, the
foundational Christian theme of the foolishness of the cross began to disappear from the European
intellectual consciousness. Thus, interpreters asked questions that were often foreign to the text’s traditors,
editors and interpreters. Ibid., 152. Najman, Seconding Sinai, 28. For Foucault it seems axiomatic that these
themes link and that the loss of the foolishness of the cross was a loss for fools as well. This is a point often
lost in studies of Foucault. Kahlfa sees the connection between Descartes and the invention of houses of
confinement at the same time as mutual sides of the same 'event' (Foucault, History of Madness, xxi.). A
compelling argument seems that Foucault, while using Descartes in significant ways, points rather to the
loss of the 'theology of the cross' as the flipside of the 'event'. Ibid., 153. In fact, this was one of the core
claims of the Reformation. One cannot read Luther without noticing how many times he refers to Reason as
"the great whore," invoking the image of the great whore, Babylon, in the Apocalypse. Similar statements,
only slightly-less inflammatory, can be found throughout Calvin. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that
Foucault does not see the confluence of two significant events here: John Calvin originally wrote the
Institutes of the Christian Religion, from where Foucault gets his quotations, as a plea for the King of
In some ways, this could be seen as Foucault’s exasperation with the 18th and 19th-centuries’ German radical revisionism of Christianity, much as Nietzsche had complained so loudly against its hypocrisy and intellectual absurdity. To be sure, neither man professed Christian faith nor did they live by commonly accepted Christian moral standards. In fact, they intentionally did not do so. Nevertheless, there is a self-consciously key point here in Foucault’s thought: the transition from the classical age to the historically constructed meanings of madness of the 18th and 19th centuries’ links to radical theological revisionism aimed at removing the scandal of the cross.

France to provide tolerance for persecuted Protestants in France, not as a theological treatise. Tragically, this plea was ignored, resulting in the murder of 5,000-20,000 Protestants on the great St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, the worst religious massacre of the century [“Bartholomew’s Day, Massacre of St.,” The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)]. It is the following century that Foucault identifies as the beginning of the creation of vast houses of confinement Foucault, History of Madness, 47. Indeed, it seems that for Foucault, the ultimate “limit experience” was the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, whom Christians claimed as the Christ. However, in the post-classical age, the foolishness of the cross was just foolishness, not the wisdom of God. Jesus was just another madman who, had he been given access to the enlightened methods of the modern asylum and psychiatry, could have been talked out of his delusions of grandeur that led to his suicidal choice to go to the cross. Ibid., 498–499. Even Christians in that age had lost sight of the foolishness of the cross, so that one who deemed himself a sinner resorted to suicide instead of repentance, forgiveness and faith. Ibid., 234.

As Foucault said, “… In a culture where the presence of the sacred has been absent for so long, a morbid desire to profane sometimes surfaces.” (Foucault, History of Madness, 105.). However, one must wonder at the end of Foucault's life if he was ever able to escape the confines of modernity's moralism, epitomized, perhaps in his criticisms of the classificatory movement, "The quest was for the morbid forms of madness, and all that was found were deformations in morality." (Ibid., 196.)

Here, Kahlfa is on point, “… there is a madness in all claims by reason to have found an absolute truth. From a Christian point of view, human reason is madness compared to the reason of God, but divine reason appears as madness to human reason. So here there is still a presence of unreason within reason, but both are looked at from a superior point of view, that of a wisdom which would understand the limits of reason…” Therefore, "To interrogate a culture about its limit-experiences is to question it at the confines of history about a tear that is something like the very birth of its history. There, in a tension that is constantly on the verge of resolution, we find a temporal continuity of a dialectical analysis confronted with the revelation, at the doors of time, of a tragic structure." (Foucault, History of Madness, xxix.) Christian theologians could just as easily apply this statement to the crucifixion. Ibid., xvi–xvii.
None of this would have meant very much for our study of the oracle against Jehoiachin, except that there were two theological developments, represented in Jeremiah scholarship by Bernhard Duhm and Sigmund Mowinckel (although they did not originate with them), that profoundly affected exegetical practice. Here a problem emerges that is not purely philosophical, but also theological.\textsuperscript{104} It has long been a commonplace in

\textsuperscript{104} For a summary, see Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 274. Also, Tom Rockmore, “Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and the Overcoming of Epistemology,” in \textit{The Specter of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue, and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics}, ed. Lawrence Schmidt, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 70. For further discussion of the problem of truth claims post-enlightenment, see Gadamer \textit{GW} II, 48, cited in Lawrence K. Schmidt, “Introduction: Between Certainty and Relativism,” in \textit{The Specter of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue, and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics}, ed. Lawrence Schmidt, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 1. Historical-criticism was not limited to the Bible, certainly, as the early writings of Nietzsche demonstrate, but it had its most profound effect there because of the nature of the Bible as a canonical witness, and thus a source of authority, of which the Enlightenment was most mistrustful. In the pre-critical period, hermeneutics was entertained as simply a task in the life of the synagogue and church. After the Enlightenment, scholarship problematized hermeneutics – especially biblical hermeneutics – as the canonical, authoritative text of the Bible appeared before the judgment seat of human reason. It did not fare well. D. F. Strauss's work, \textit{The Life of Jesus}, first published in 1835, initially scandalized those who were attempting to do biblical hermeneutics because of its radical denial of the divinity of Christ. Hans Frei summarizes in Frei, \textit{The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative}, 224. Nevertheless, Strauss, to his credit, was consistent in working out his methodology, so that he could say in a much later work that the only responsible, honest thing to do in light of his biblical studies was to reject his faith in Jesus Christ! George S Williamson, \textit{The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 252. This led Karl Marx to proclaim as early as 1844: “For Germany the criticism of religion is in the main complete, and criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism.” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, \textit{K. Marx and F. Engels on Religion} (Foreign Languages Pub. House, 1957), 41. Nevertheless, their critique held as long as the Enlightenment stance for reason and against prejudice remained in place. While many interpreters since then have realized that the Enlightenment starting place of the point of human reason is fraught with prejudice all of its own, biblical hermeneutics still often resembles more a morass of competing academic opinions based on more-or-less speculative historical reconstructions that seldom produce real consensus. The great promise of critical methodology was that scholars, primarily by means of literary style (although sometimes archaeological evidence could obtain) would be able to assign recognizable strands in the biblical corpus to different authors even though they appeared within the same book. An excellent summary can be found in Joel S Baden, \textit{The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis}, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 13–33. One can read the compelling history of this account in any number of contemporary Bible encyclopedias or dictionaries, although perhaps the most current and comprehensive appear in the Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary. It notes the rise of such a seemingly endless array of competing and conflicting theories of composition, that many scholars began to turn to the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and Saussure if only to gain some relief and room to work! J.C. O’Neill, “Biblical Criticism,” \textit{Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary} (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 729. However, as attractive as structuralism was pragmatically, many scholars realized that it was only a
biblical studies that the 19th century ideal of the Romantic poet, considered authentic because of his or her originality and individuality, provided the basis for many stylistic decisions in biblical studies. Yet, this conception fares poorly of late in literary studies and deserves a recasting in biblical studies as well, particularly as it relates to the prose/poetry distinctions which first severed Jehoiachin’s oracle asunder. Duhm’s refined definition of style has a strong theological impetus from an unlikely source.

brief respite, because too much historical work was already extant to leave the historical questions unanswered. So the historical-critical project of a reconstructed text and a reconstructed history continued apace, despite the complaints of scholars such as Gadamer, Childs and Frei that other scholars were no longer studying the Bible, but simply an academic construct of the modern – and now postmodern – age. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 274. Rockmore, “Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and the Overcoming of Epistemology,” 70. Cf. also Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, 40. Here, Childs does with the text of the Bible what Hans Frei does with its narratives in Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative.

105 Göran Hermerén, Influence in Art and Literature (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1975), 130–131. J.T. Shaw, “Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies,” in Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed. Newton Phelps Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (Carbondale, Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1961), 86. This problem is endemic through the period. “According to Jay Claylon and Eric Rothstein influence studies fell out of favour for a number of reasons, but there are four major "movements" in the "decentering of the author" which have been most damaging. The first movement maintains that "behind an idea of influence lie dubious nonnative judgments about originality" (12). This refers to the notion of creative indebtedness mentioned above, rooted in certain eighteenth-century critical practices which sought to expose the creative thefts of new artists from their precursors. A critic would expose the younger author's inability to produce original work, thereby establishing a hierarchy of genius which is simply not interesting to modernist aesthetics, where often it the crafty borrowing of material admired (13).” Gregory Maxwell Pike, “Friedrich Nietzsche’s Influence on Elizabeth Smart’s By Grand Central Station I Sat down and Wept” (Thesis, McGill University, 2000), 6–7.

106 It seems likely that Duhm relied on Nietzsche's definitions of style, and on his theological categories (which he had inherited from Strauss) and uses them extensively throughout his work. Of course, Strauss had influences far beyond Nietzsche. “If Harnack’s historical Jesus was a reflection of the liberal Protestant scholar, Schweitzer’s had an element of the heroic “superman” of Nietzsche, a philosopher whom Schweitzer admired. Schweitzer went on to apply his “Christ mysticism” to the apostle Paul (Paul and His Interpreters, 1911; ET 1912; The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul, 1930; ET 1931). ... Having adopted the methodological principle, allegedly forced upon him by Strauss, of working strictly with the “historical” which was juxtaposed to the “supernatural,” the work of systematic theologians could safely be left out of account.” Colin Brown, “Historical Jesus, Quest Of,” ed. Joel B Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 332. Moreover, Strauss’s work has come under serious scrutiny, and is no longer finding a welcome reception. “Strauss’s analysis has been criticized on grounds that his employment of the category of myth was far too broad and undiscriminating. In particular, the work of Karl Barth, Erich Auerbach and Hans Frei has indicated that many of the miraculous phenomena—including the resurrection appearances—do not appear in legendary or mythical modes of presentation, but instead appear in the form of realistic narrative, notwithstanding their subject matter.” The question of their status as historical truth-claims has thereby re-
Both scholars participated in the attempt begun in German critical scholarship to redefine Protestantism at a confessional level.\(^{107}\) I do not mean to suggest that Duhm and Mowinckel deliberately wrote their exegesis to support the new Protestant confessionalism of the 19\(^{th}\) century. Rather, the new liberal Protestant confessionalism notably had no place for a conception of kingship such as we find in the oracle against Jehoiachin in 22:24-30.

In the new Protestant confessionalism of Duhm, leadership must be strong, virile and victorious. Wicked kings merit punishment for their wickedness, but destroying a king as this oracle announces, with no stipulations of covenant wrongdoing, and leaving him helpless and impotent creates a figure of a weak, failed, cutoff leader that simply did not fit the new theological system.\(^{108}\) Further, Duhm’s cultural context was part of a milieu that was experiencing a time of pressing demand for German scholars to define the myth of national Germany in the late 19\(^{th}\) century.\(^{109}\) Although Duhm and his generation of scholars are not responsible for how others later used the aims they shared, this project generally was to have disastrous consequences in the creation of a national myth that emerged in academic theology. Moreover, it is arguable that the rationality of such truth-claims precludes the validity of Strauss’s genetic account in much the same way that the rationality of theistic truth-claims precludes the validity of theories of the origins of religion such as those proposed by Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Freud.” Neil MacDonald, “Strauss, David (1808-1874),” ed. Richard Bauckham et al., The Dictionary of Historical Theology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2000), 531–532.

\(^{107}\) It is important to note here that many Protestant theologians did not agree that the new methodologies required theological innovation. Cf. especially the latest scholarly discussion of this issue in Muller, Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics 2, 2:144–145. Their voices eventually gave way to the new theological agenda, however.

\(^{108}\) See, e.g. Duhm, The Ever-Coming Kingdom of God ; a Discussion on Religious Progress, 6–9, 70; Mowinckel, Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia, 11. See also the discussion in Yair Lorberbaum, Disempowered King: Monarchy in Classical Jewish Literature, The Kogod Library of Judaic Studies 9 (New York, N.Y: Continuum, 2010), 9–10.

\(^{109}\) Williamson, The Longing for Myth in Germany, 283.
deliberately excluded Jews not only from citizenship, but also from participation in the German church, thus creating the *Deutsche Christen* church. The last courageous voice to speak out against this horrific caricature of religion was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He affirmed in opposition to the *Deutsche Christen* church that the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) were the only source and norm for the teaching of the church, and stood opposed to all attempts to replace the Old Testament by Germanic myths.\footnote{Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Berlin: 1932-1933*, ed. Larry Rasmussen, Carsten Nicolaisen, and Ernst-Albert Scharffenorth, trans. Israel Best, David Higgins, and Douglas W. Stott, 12th ed., Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 505.} The developments in Germany and its implications for biblical scholarship were truly alarming.\footnote{Cf. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel*, 150.}

**Duhm and Nietzsche**

Duhm apparently never mentioned Nietzsche in his writings.\footnote{This is true, even though Nietzsche along with Marx, Freud and the Romantic poets have received the title of secular prophet. Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003), 153. Gary D. Badecock, “Nietzsche, Friedrich (1844–1900),” ed. Richard Bauckham et al., *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2000).} Nevertheless, there is a reason for this that is both plausible and probable. Nietzsche was in disfavor with the German academy and the regnant liberal Protestantism of the time. Further, the winds of influence that blew through Göttingen, Bonn and Leipzig, where Duhm and Nietzsche studied, respectively, and the University of Basel, where Nietzsche taught from 1869-1879, and where Duhm taught from 1888 until his death in 1913, gave Duhm a prudential reason for leaving Nietzsche’s name out of his work. It also provided the common currents of thought that Duhm could draw from. In the case of Duhm, his liberal
Protestant reaction against Nietzsche would have been a cause for him to use Nietzschean stylistic categories subversively as a means of protest against Nietzsche’s attacks on the dominant Christianity, liberal Protestantism, of that time.\textsuperscript{113} We have already noted above Duhm’s moment of enlightenment, where he refers to Jeremiah as a “great man.”\textsuperscript{114} His comment about the “great man” could easily pass by unnoticed, except for the direction in which his later theological development went, as noted below, where he came to view Jesus as either a precursor to, or something like, the Overman (though not, of course, using Nietzsche’s terminology). Then he could evaluate literary style as a way to separate the true words of the prophet from his reliable, if somewhat boring, interpreter Baruch, and later editors and redactors, and recover the original great man himself, Jeremiah.

For Duhm, there is no personal being called “God” and the doctrinal propositions of Christianity are irrelevant. Duhm states baldly other cultures’ connection to ancient myth in the Indian/Aryan account.\textsuperscript{115} What people call God and religion is nothing more than the expression of the “One Will.” This is no different from Nietzsche’s own views on religion, for Nietzsche was quite happy to use a great variety of biblical terms and allusions in his writings as well.\textsuperscript{116} Duhm shows a clear dependence on Nietzschean ideals. Although Nietzsche had died by the time Duhm wrote this, he doubtless would not have approved. At the end of Part II of \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, Zarathustra describes his

\textsuperscript{113} Nietzschean Christians were overwhelmingly Protestant, but the movement eventually turned post-Protestant. Cf. the discussion in Aschheim, \textit{The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990}, 22.

\textsuperscript{114} Duhm, \textit{Das Buch Jeremia}, vii.

\textsuperscript{115} Duhm, \textit{The Ever-Coming Kingdom of God ; a Discussion on Religious Progress}, 9.

painful, broken life, the deep questions that tormented soul about his own integrity, resentment and the desire for revenge, and the ferocious desire to “will backwards” in time. 117 It seems likely that Nietzsche is describing his own feelings of resentment toward the culture from which he felt alienated. Undoubtedly, that resentment would only have increased given his knowledge that men like Bernhard Duhm followed him at Basel who adopted his literary strategies, his reinvention of the Romantic hero, as well as his rejection of traditional Christian doctrines – and yet retained their personal profession of Christianity as well as their professorships!

The upshot is that there is a fundamental problem. Foucault identified the loss of universal interpretive lens for the problem of madness in modern society as a whole. This lens also could have made sense of the otherwise-inexplicable tension between love and rejection in the oracle against Jehoiachin.

**Duhm and the German Myth**

According to Foucault, the removal of the theology of the cross is an even more important intellectual turn in Germany than Enlightenment consciousness, and became the intellectual climate in which Nietzsche, much to his chagrin, appeared enmasked under Christian terminology. This included the work of Bernhard Duhm, and affected his ability to understand the function of the oracle against Jehoiachin.118

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118 By "masking," we do not intend to imply or insinuate bad motives. Properly assessing the psychological interior of a person is exceedingly difficult, and there is little to go on anyway in the case of Duhm. The explanation rather appears in the cultural longing for myth in Germany during that time, something shared in common by Nietzsche and practically everyone in biblical studies and theology. As a working definition for mask, we take: “…an ever-provisional, mobile effect of specific rhetorical acts – taken in the largest sense as instances of general discursive practices – a multiple, composite construction
“Myth” had become a category in 19th century Germany, and remained essentially a German enterprise until the end of the 19th century, used to locate a sacred narrative that embodied the ideals of a community or nation. Nietzsche’s intent was to unite the historical-critical methods of philology to a program of aesthetic-religious reform. This was exactly the kind of reform aimed at within the Protestant liberal and mediating theological positions, although retaining the terminology and nomenclature of Christianity. One can see this process at work in Duhm, who said,

“To-day we are Christians, and Protestants withal; but why have we lost the eagerness to understand the whole world and to rest in sure mastery of it? Where is our certainty of the future? Where is our foretaste of victory?”

that a selected personal style or set of styles unifies – if at all – moment by moment. Yeats's name for this overdetermined rhetorical self-effect is "mask,"…” O'Hara, *Radical Parody*, 14–15. Nietzsche’s influence began to obtain directly in German intellectual circles from around 1890 on. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 1890-1990, 30, 53.

119 In Williamson’s book, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, received with acclaim (Robert C. Holub, “Review: The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche,” *The Modern Language Review* 101, no. 3 (July 2006): 889–891.) Williamson argues, “…narratives of national liberation, historicism, humanism, and Christianity had become intertwined over the course of the nineteenth century. For many intellectuals, the foundation of the Kaiserreich in 1871 demonstrated the triumph of these ideas…” Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, 6. Most of the studies on the development of myth in Germany have focused on the development of Greek and Aryan myths, and have left aside the development of the category of "myth" as a new way of appropriating the biblical narratives in a way specifically designed to serve the purposes of national Germany. Ibid., 9. These problems of 19th century methodology are now apparent in contemporary study of religion as in serious need of updating. Cf. the discussion in Willard Oxtoby and Alan Segal, eds., *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011).


121 Duhm, *The Ever-Coming Kingdom of God; a Discussion on Religious Progress*, 6–7. For some later interpreters, this eventually evolved into a program of extreme nationalism, which would eventually exclude every other myth in search of an ancient German myth. So argues Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany*, 14, 296–297. The idea of "myth" as an interpretive category for religious narrative eventually became, as all else, simply a servant to the longing for the national myth in Germany, eventually culminating in the ascendency of National Socialism, ultimately creating that grotesque caricature, the *Deutsche Christen* movement and church. Along the way, it became, not a way to unite peoples around their unique myths, but eventually denied any possibility of a meaningful transfer between cultures or epochs, hardening racial, ethnic, social and class lines. Ibid., 299. For the effect on critical Biblical studies, see the review in Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 40. Briefly, Aschheim sums up,
On the one hand, of course, Duhm worked on the text itself, and often he accurately observed stylistic details. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly times when his stylistic sensitivities come from something other than the text, often resembling Nietzsche. And at the heart of that is not only the problem of the enlightenment philosophical bias, but the theological agenda of German Vermittlungstheologie, its radical overhaul of Christian theology, and rejection of any sort of theology of the cross in its classical sense. In other words, there is a strong theological agenda at work.122

“Suitably nationalized (or socialized or Protestantized), its [Nietzschean’s] dynamic was placed at the service of goals which tended either to tame its radical drive, or to selectively to deploy and unleash it.” Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990, 15. There were strong prudential reasons for Duhm avoiding any mention of Nietzsche. Nietzsche did not approve of the liberal, mediating Protestantism that Duhm and most of the German theological guild espoused. Further, Nietzsche's vociferous attacks on Christianity had made him unwelcome in the German academy, which, although liberal, still was supported by state funding and was expected to turn out Christian ministers for the state-supported church! Although the cultural situations are different, a similar phenomenon happened in America with the influence of socialism in the early part of the 20th century. “...somewhere between 5 and 25 percent of all mainline Protestant clergy.” Dan McKanan, “The Implicit Religion of Radicalism: Socialist Party Theology, 1900–1934,” Journal of the American Academy of Religion 78, no. 3 (2010): 757. Many ecclesiastical officials held socialist sympathies and memberships, all the while redefining Christianity in radically socialist terms, but keeping them concealed because of the general unacceptability of socialism in the American context. Ibid., 750–751. Here, in America, a similar kind of conflict as that between Nietzsche and the theological guild also obtained. Ibid., 754. There is the intriguing parallel of Reinhold Niebuhr, who was a Socialist party member, and then eventually left over ideological differences, a move with possible parallels to Heidegger's ejection from the National Socialist party. Ibid., 759, 773. Germans even had their "unchurched spirituality" similar to the free religious movements that began to spring up in Germany. Williamson, The Longing for Myth in Germany, 253; McKanan, “The Implicit Religion of Radicalism,” 766. Everyone borrowed selectively from Nietzsche. Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990, 10. There can be no doubt that Duhm saw his work as maintaining only the nomenclature of Christianity, but radically overhauling its substance to the point where it was unrecognizable by any previous definition. In this, he fits the notion of the “strong poet” every bit as much as Nietzsche does. For that definition, see O’Hara, Radical Parody, 152. This created the crisis of faith and the need to find a via media (Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990, 201.), eventually becoming the Vermittlungstheologie of Germany.

122 Duhm represents the Vermittlungstheologie of the German Protestant establishment. Thomas Mann has analyzed this in his soul-searching work, Dr. Faustus. Strauss had argued in his final work “All liberal and mediating theologies, he now declared, were half-measures in the face of Christianity's imminent intellectual bankruptcy. 'I don't want to twist and split hairs, if we want to leave behind 'yes and no' – in a word, if we want to speak as honorable and honest people, then we must confess: we are no longer Christians.' Strauss rejected God, he rejected Jesus, and he rejected the immortality of the soul...Williamson, The Longing for Myth in Germany, 252. Duhm fits the figure that Thomas Mann creates in Prof. Kumpf, the paradigmatic middle-of-the-road German theologian, a "juicy" lecturer of an "... intermediary conservatism with critical-liberal infusions..." whom the main character Adrian Leverkuhn
theology of the cross, as noted above in the introduction, should not confine one to a particular theory of atonement in Christian theology. Rather it is simply the notion that the death of Jesus as a common criminal under Roman law transforms into his triumph as eternal Son of God. This is the “madness of the cross” which Foucault referred to which was lost in 18th century Europe. The difficulty is not a problem, of course, for the Shaphanides, for whom such a theology would be an anachronism. It is only a problem for liberal German Protestantism, which believed the theory of the cross too closely connected with primitive barbarism and human sacrifice to retain any longer in any modern religion.123 By making this move theologically, the liberal German Protestant establishment had also removed a potential hermeneutical category for understanding the Jeremianic portrayal of Jehoiachin. This is not to compare Jehoiachin’s sufferings to Jesus’ sufferings, or somehow make him a “type” of the New Testament’s portrayal of Jesus. Rather, Jehoiachin was a weak and powerless king who suffered humiliation, only later, apparently against the express oracle of Jeremiah, to find a position of power in a new context and a new world empire, or so Jeremiah 52 leads us to believe. Liberal

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Protestantism, of the brand of which Duhm and his German contemporaries participated in, had no conceptual space for such a notion.

There is no need for contemporary scholars to adopt positions either for or against a theology of the cross to do adequate and accurate scholarly work on Jeremiah. However, we should recognize the theological agenda that was an integral part of Duhm’s foundational work, since it shaped his own personal goals and the uses to which he believed texts could function in his contemporary German Protestant church and remains the foundation for Jeremiah studies to this day. By relativizing Duhm’s critical foundation, we can reconsider one of the gold standards in Jeremiah studies, the prose/poetry distinction upon which Duhm’s work built.

**Prose/Poetry and the A/B Source Distinctions**

The use of poetry/prose distinctions in interpreting the Hebrew Bible is a standard since Robert Lowth’s pioneering work *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. There, he argued that parallelism was the distinguishing feature of Hebrew poetry, as opposed to meter in Greek and Latin poetry.\(^{124}\) This could be a simple parallelism, where the second line essentially repeated the first line, a synthetic parallelism, where the second line built on the first line, or an antithetical parallelism, where the second line contradicted the first line. It is a simple and straightforward schema that proved so compelling that it remains a commonplace in most translations of the Hebrew Bible today and is standard fare for every seminarian or graduate student in intermediate or advanced Hebrew.

There have been two significant critiques of this theory by Robert Alter and James Kugel, in which both argue that prose and poetry are not so much literary distinctions as places on a continuum in the Hebrew Bible, and especially the prophets. Yet, the idea of biblical poetry continues to be a category that scholars use in defining various sections of the Hebrew Bible.

Yet there are two issues that Kugel raises that are of critical importance for the oracle under consideration, and for poetry throughout Jeremiah. Kugel observes:

“...Lowth’s argument, as we have seen, was aimed largely at the Prophets; he wished to suggest that prophecy is a kind of “Divine poesy.” Revolutionary enough: but he could not confine poesy to the books he named precisely because “parallelism” was not an either/or matter, and so “biblical poetry” has spilled over from the poetical Isaiah and the semi-poetical Jeremiah to other books with their histories, genealogies, blessings, curses, speeches, and so on.”

The upshot of Kugel’s argument is that much of the prose in Jeremiah (and, indeed, throughout the Hebrew Bible) shares a parallelism that often intrudes in unexpected places throughout.

Kugel indeed has a point in Jeremiah. By paying attention to other grammatical markers, such as the use of first-, second-, and third-person singular and plural pronouns in the poetic passages, one can easily discern a liturgical or dramatic context in the sections generally understood as poetic. This practice seems to heighten in the final collection of poems before the last chapter of the book (chapters 45-51), and reaches its


127 For specific examples in Jeremiah, see Ibid., 76–83.
peak in the savage, beautiful poetry of the oracle against Babylon (chapters 50-51). This raises the question of how reliable prose and poetry distinctions are in dating various sections of Jeremiah. The poetic sections give evidence of liturgical formulation, which could almost certainly only point to a Babylonian context, perhaps under the direction of Seraiah, the final Shaphanide mentioned in Jeremiah, and the exiles in Babylon.  

Nevertheless, there is a deeper problem, and that is the problem we have noted above, the tendency within German scholarship to enlist itself in the search for national myth in the making of modern Germany at the end of the 19th century. Lowth believed, and much of Protestant scholarship accepted, including Mowinckel, the idea that by uncovering the poetry of the Hebrew Bible one could come closer to the actual divine speech itself. This search for the divine in poetry was part of an overall hermeneutical agenda of reviving ancient folk traditions rooted, so the 19th-century romantics believed, in the high art of poetry as the expression of the images of the imagination. Lowth’s influence spread across the disciplines, so that

“...all these explorations of [Robert Lowth’s definition of] synthetic parallelism are modern experiments with non-rational modes of thought. They can very well be understood as concerted efforts to revive or justify the correlative episteme as a way to the ultimate truth which in modern times has been relocated in immediate experience and has become inaccessible to intellect and reason. Largely because of this general cultural significance, critical investigations of synthetic parallelism cut across so many disciplines, attract attention from so many important thinkers, and bring forth so many important literary theories. With this cultural significance in mind, we can also understand why these inquiries transcend the entrenched boundaries of Western thought and draw heavily

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128 For a discussion of the likely liturgical context of Seraiah and the exiles in Babylon, see Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, 154–166.

129 Kugel, How to Read the Bible, 33.
from Eastern, particularly Chinese sources. With little mutual encouragement, Davis, Pound, Jung, and Jakobson are all taken up [with] Chinese synthetic parallelism in the poetic or divinational form, regarding it as an ideal model of non-presentational mode untainted by the Western rationalism.”

These experiments of Eastern divination techniques in Western literature are illuminating and can be insightful. However, it is doubtful that they provide much, if any, insight into the actual phenomenon of Hebrew poetry. None of this argues that we undo the critical consensus or dispense with poetry as a means of distinguishing text-types in Jeremiah. However, it does mean that we need to think more carefully about the prose/poetry divisions that scholars understand to differentiate Jeremiah 22:24-27 from 28-30.

**The Liturgical Setting of A/Poetry**

Even poetry bears signs of editing and redaction in the collecting of oracles into a liturgical framework. The concern of the redactors did not seem to be the same as that of Duhm and Mowinckel, a recovery of the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet in poetic form as the manifestation of the charismatic ecstatic at the center of primal religion and culture. Rather, the redactors were concerned with how to frame the oracles literarily for two audiences outside Palestine, first in Egypt, then in Babylon.

I have followed a different schema in the King Collection below, relying on the clues of the uses of first-, second- and third-person singular and plural pronouns to uncover a liturgical framework, likely developed for the exilic community in Babylon,
the same community Seraiah addresses at the end of ch. 51. Recognizing different uses of pronouns as evidence of redactional layers goes back to some of the early critical studies on the composition of the book of Deuteronomy. Steuernagel first pioneered this theory, quickly followed by W. Staerck. The theory persisted and became a significant part of Noth’s theory of the Deuteronomistic History. Perhaps most critically, for Martin Noth, this core was

“... then supplemented through a process of gradual growth and elaboration that resulted primarily from the oral reading and exposition of the law ([Deuteronomy] 31:9-13). North’s thesis had a monumental impact on all research to follow, and his views commonly serve as a starting point for subsequent writers.”

However, scholars have not applied this important observation to Jeremiah studies, primarily because the identification of the source and redactional layers has built on the foundation of Duhm and Mowinckel using the prose/poetry distinction, rather than the pronoun distinctions used in Deuteronomy. However, if we look closely at the poetry sections in Jeremiah, it is evident that even these bear evidence of redactional layers which can be identified by the use of first-, second- and third-person pronouns, as well as the singular and plural pronouns in Noth’s theory. This we pursue in detail in chapter 3.

131 “By the end of the first decade of the sixth century, Jeremiah 27–29/30–31 /50–51 constituted a distinct collection directed to the favored 597 community, conveying teachings specifically geared for them but presenting them in rhetorical forms that supported those teachings.” Leuchter, The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45, 66.

132 Emanuel Tov, Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible and Qumran: Collected Essays, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 121 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 216.


Re-lying the Critical Foundation

“Biblical Studies provides a way of critically engaging the ideological assumptions of contemporary theory, whose objections to the notion of a canon are certainly understandable: for being exclusive; for encoding class, race, or gender bias; for silencing competing or less prestigious voices; for ignoring difference; for arresting social change; for enshrining privilege. Yet in all such cases, the canon is taken to be a self-sufficient, unchanging entity, one that not only properly demands the construction but also outright rejection. But, in being read that way, the deconstruction of the canon itself entails an alternative construction, a historically conceptualizing of the canon from the perspective of the present, whereby it appears close, both literally and metaphorically. Too often, that approach remains blind to its own lack of historical ground. It locates critique as something external to the canon, thus transforming the canon into a lifeless literary fossil. The contrary premise here is that critical theory is not at odds with the canon but central to the canon and sanctioned by it.”135

It seems likely that the figure of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah appears deliberately cast as a complex dramatic figure whom later tradition rehabilitates on a symbolic level, believing that in so doing it remains faithful to the prophet, not divergent from him. A number of Josiah’s descendants already have served dramatic purposes.136 Yet, it seems that the singularity of the judgment oracle against Jehoiachin and his dramatic reappearance at the end of the book, clearly by a later editor’s hand, perpetuates him in some specific way for the continuing consideration of the remnant in exile. Figuring out what role, exactly, Jehoiachin is to play, however, has proven difficult.137 Certainly, in Kings, he serves in dramatic fashion to show the end of the Davidide line in a way similar

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135 Levinson, Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel, 11.

136 Seitz, Theology in Conflict, 20.

137 Rosenberg, “Jesus, Isaac, and the ‘Suffering Servant’,” 381.
to Mephibosheth for the line of Saul.138 Beyond this, however, several scholars have attempted to identify Jehoiachin with the suffering servant cycles of deuteronomy-Isaiah, which began to develop more strongly from the 5th century BCE onward.139

As we noted above, Jewish scholar Julian Morgenstern noted that part of that development could have grown out of historical experience, in which Evil-Merodach included Jehoiachin in a Babylonian ceremony as a vicarious substitute for the king. In this ceremony, two prisoners, one of whom died, and the other (in this case, obviously, Jehoiachin) received freedom, which signaled penitence and resurrection for the king. Given the timing of Jehoiachin’s release, Morgenstern believes that Jehoiachin’s release was part of that ceremony.140 While M. Goulder has attempted to demonstrate that, in fact, Jehoiachin is the suffering servant, this theory has difficulties.141 Rosenberg argues that the Jehoiachin story passed on into a cycle of accounts that culminated in the depiction of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. 142 Although such a culmination at Isaiah 53 is unlikely, Rosenberg is an example of scholars who think Jehoiachin shares thematic resonances with other texts regarding hope and suffering. As the hopes of the people of


Israel passed in turn from Jehoiachin, and then to Zerubbabel at the authorization of Haggai, only to be disappointed again, it would only have been natural that this unfinished story would have moved forward in a perpetual theme of hope for a long-suffering people.143

Perhaps this hope prompted Matthew to include Jehoiachin as a transitional figure in the royal genealogy of Jesus.144 His presence, after receiving condemnation by the Deuteronomic historian in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles along with the rest of Israel’s kings, two scholars believe testifies to the “attenuated hope” that the Shaphanide scribes left for the exiles in the person of king Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 52.145 While he appears at the end of the DtrH and Jeremiah as a possibility for the restoration of David’s line, the restoration and second-temple writings give no indication this ever occurred.146 The hopes for the revival of the kingly line seemed to have died with his death in Babylon.

The figure of Jehoiachin sits awkwardly in the middle of the book of Jeremiah and appears, just as unexpectedly, at the end in peace. The difficulty interpreters have in assessing his importance likely reflects the difficulties of the exiles in assessing their situation after the word of the prophet had come true. Yet he remains in the canon as a complex and complicated dramatic figure.


So how are contemporary readers and hearers to “hear the word” of the prophet concerning Jehoiachin? According to the totality of the pre-critical Christian interpretive tradition, one must simultaneously hear a word of judgment, as well as a word of grace. According to Gunkel, one must first remove it from the dead weight of its canonical trappings. According to Duhm, one must recognize the strength of will within Jeremiah over Jehoiachin as if it were God himself.147 According to Mowinckel, one must peel away the secondary and tertiary levels of written tradition so that one can enter into the internal charismatic, ecstatic experience of the prophet as he announced the judgment against Jehoiachin. Granted, few, if any, seriously attempt to follow this path as a means of understanding the recorded words of the prophet anymore.148 Such attempts lead to an analysis of the world behind the text, instead of the text itself.149 It requires us to project ourselves into cultural circumstances so far distant from us that re-creating them for ourselves as readers and hearers of the text is a practical impossibility. Further, it cuts off the clear evidence within the canon of an editorial process (i.e., chs. 21-23, 36, 52) that plots a trajectory of an inexplicably renewed figure of Jehoiachin.


148 In fact, Blenkinsopp observes that this was not the case in other near eastern societies known for prophetism either. “..In Egypt… A skilled speaker, one Nefertiti, priest-scribe of the goddess Bastat, is introduced to Pharaoh Snefru of the fourth Dynasty and utters a prophecy of social and political chaos to come which will be brought to an end by a king who will come from the South, destroy the enemies of Egypt, and restore justice and order in the land (ANET, 444-446). To our purpose, the author of the prediction is near ecstatic nor charismatic, it is introduced into the narrative as scribe and rhetorician.” Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel, 55.

However, interpreters cannot fully appreciate this trajectory unless they dispense with Protestant theological views that undergird the 19th-century framers of Jeremiah research. The new Protestant doctrine of inspiration led to an inability to understand the role of the canon in a traditionary process and this has led to a dead end for many interpreters. For many, the canon is simply an arbitrary point in the literary development of the text with no great significance in and of itself. However, an attempt at a retreat to an imagined Israelite primitivism ala Gunkel, Duhm and Mowinckel will be no more successful than the romantic movements that preceded it. On the other hand, with the advent of critical scholarship, a pre-critical, harmonizing reading of the text no longer satisfies either. Childs argues:

*The canonical shaping of the Jeremianic tradition accepted the Deuteronomic framework as an authentic interpretation of Jeremiah’s ministry which it used to frame the earlier poetic material.... The canonical shaping of the book confirmed as authentic the later picture of Jeremiah’s ministry which was portrayed in the light of the larger canon and which it used along with the uninterpreted poetic oracles. The present form of Jeremiah’s oracles goes beyond the historical recounting of the prophet’s activity. Rather, the memory of his proclamation was treasured by a community of faith and consciously shaped by theological forces to serve as a witness for future Israel.*

This is exactly what the Shaphanide editors of the book of Jeremiah did, as John Calvin noticed well before the advent of critical scholarship:

“We have said that prophetic books were not written by their authors in the order in which they are now read. But when a Prophet had preached, and committed to writing a summary of his doctrine, he fixed it to the doors of the temple. And there were scribes who collected the summaries, and the volumes now extant were made from these. I now repeat the same

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thing, because some one may wonder that the order of time was not observed by Jeremiah: for hereafter he will prophesy of heathen nations; and it is certain, that these prophecies were announced, in part, before the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, some during his reign, and some in the time of Zedekiah. But the reason I have stated ought to be borne in mind, that this book we have now in our hands was not written by Jeremiah himself, but that it contains collected summaries, afterwards formed into one volume. "\(^{152}\) (emphasis added)

Mark Leuchter has opened up new paths for understanding the political processes than shaped the text we have today by this process.\(^{153}\) To the credit of the later tradents, they allow the stories to remain as they were so that future generations could find a meaning in them, which their faith told them, would come in time.\(^{154}\) The contrasting visions of Jehoiachin are reflected in the pre-critical literature with the rabbis, Josephus and Luther on one side and Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Calvin on the other, standing as testimony to the conflicted picture that he presents. Critical scholarship advanced much further the understanding of Jeremiah, and particularly Jehoiachin, in allowing us to see the layers of tradition that developed as succeeding generations struggled to appropriate the words of the prophets for themselves. It erred in seeing this tradition as a dead accretion, instead of a living faith. Thankfully, critical interpretation has moved significantly so that it also can begin to make sense of the figure of Jehoiachin and understand the projects of the rabbis, Josephus and the New Testament.


\(^{153}\) Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45*.

\(^{154}\) Hermisson, “Jeremias Wort über Jojachin,” 270.
Nevertheless, to complete this process and “hear the word” of Jeremiah today requires removing the vestiges of a psychologized Protestant critical doctrine of inspiration, which has no basis in the biblical text, or in historic Christian or Jewish understandings. Only then can we hear the complex figure of Jehoiachin as his significance resonates through succeeding ages signifying hope beyond judgment for a people who persist in faith in the word of the Lord through the prophet. Only then can one see how the trajectory begins, but does not end, in the canonical record of the book of Jeremiah. Jehoiachin progressed from unremarkable king to tragic sufferer to dramatic figure of grace and restoration through atonement, contributing to the developing suffering servant motifs in an unfinished national story that would become important to later interpreters.

155 A clear example of this appears in simple modifications to Mowinckel’s theory. He says, “Behind the tradition, after all, looms the powerful figures of the prophets, who have created that very tradition. And in a number of cases their own words speak to us so clearly that we cannot miss them. We are not going to allow anyone to deprive us of the right to attempt to let them speak as clearly as possible. In many cases we may have to give up. Sometimes the voice of the prophet sounds like a powerful leading melody, at other times like a deep undertone in the course of the tradition, and at others more subdued, flooded by the multi-stringed accompaniment of tradition. We will attempt to ascertain their words, get hold of the original settings, approximately as they once sounded in the streets and marketplaces of Jerusalem and by the gates of the Temple.” (emphasis added). Mowinckel, The Spirit and the Word, 80. Take the italicized sentence out of Mowinckel’s theological and methodological moorings that surround it and one has a powerful metaphor for the interpretation of tradition that can make sense of its continuing life after exile. Of course, for Mowinckel, this is not possible because of his theological commitments to his particular doctrine of inspiration, but it is not necessary that we adopt his theological position to appreciate a possibility his method opens.
CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ORACLE – TEXT AND CONTEXT

In order to understand adequately the redaction of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah, we must pay attention, however briefly, to how his story appears in the DtrH.

Mephibosheth and Jehoiachin

There are a number of resonances between Jehoiachin’s story at the end of the DtrH (Jeremiah 52) and the story of Mephibosheth, the last heir of Saul and his treatment by the house of David. In fact, it is likely that the DtrH use the story of Mephibosheth as an interpretive category for Jehoiachin. As Schipper notes:

“...by further examining the resonance of the story of Jehoiachin in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 with Mephibosheth’s story in 2 Samuel, one can strengthen Murray's case that 2 Kgs 25:27-30 presents little hope for the restoration of Davidic kingship, but still presents hope of a tolerable exilic future. Several scholars have noted the resonance between the respective depictions of the fates of Jehoiachin, who is the last of David's house, and Mephibosheth, who is the last of Saul's house.”

As Robert Polzin notes, in the DtrH, the concluding picture of Jehoiachin appears as a Mephibosheth redivivus. Just as Mephibosheth represents the end of the long slow decline of Saul's monarchy, so Jehoiachin represents the end of the long, slow decline of the Davidic monarchy. Schipper notes that both Mephibosheth and Jehoiachin finished out their lives rather well in the house of another king. However, as Schipper observes,


2 Robert Polzin, David and the Deuteronomist: 2 Samuel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 103–106. As Schipper notes, is not at all surprising that the DtrH draws the same lesson from the end of the Davidic line as it does from the end of Saul's line. Schipper, “‘Significant Resonances’ with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25,” 525.
the critical difference between Saul's monarchy and the Davidic monarchy lay in the fact that Yahweh apparently had made an unconditional promise to David regarding the perpetuity of his posterity on the throne of Israel (2 Samuel 7) but not Saul. Schipper comments:

“...as Begg observes, if the Deuteronomist saw Jehoiachin's release as connected to Nathan's prophecy in 2 Samuel 7, one might expect a "fulfillment notice" in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 since, as von Rad himself notes, the Deuteronomist frequently employs such notices throughout the books of Kings. For example, see 1 Kgs 14:7, 8a, 9b-11, 13b fulfilled in 1 Kgs 15:29; 1 Kgs 16:1-4 fulfilled in 1 Kgs 16:11-12; Josh 6:26 fulfilled in 1 Kgs 16:34; 2 Kgs 9:7-10a fulfilled in 2 Kgs 9:36; 1 Kgs 21:19b, 20b-24 and 22:38 fulfilled in 2 Kgs 10:17a; 1 Kgs 13:2 fulfilled in 2 Kgs 23:16; 2 Kgs 21:10-14 fulfilled in 2 Kgs 24:2.”

The Shaphanide scribes rearrange the end of the Deuteronomistic History radically. Thus, they are able to keep alive the hope of a restored Davidide in the future that surpasses the fate of Mephibosheth.

Approaching Jehoiachin and His Oracle

Placed awkwardly at the end of the oracles against the kings in Jeremiah 22, Jehoiachin dangles from the end of a long noose prepared by Jeremiah for several generations of kings, whom he blames, along with the prophets and the people, for the coming destruction of Judah. The institution initiated by a priest (1 Samuel 16:13), has been finished off by a prophet, or so it appears from the oracles against the kings in

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4 Cf. the discussion of the work of Mary Callaway, one of the few who has devoted attention to the Jeremianic narratives as prophet-king narratives in M. Weinfield, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 88, no. 1 (1976): 165–166.
Jeremiah 22. In the MT, probably reflecting later stages of development, Jehoiachin appears as the concluding figure of the book, a paradigm of submission to the word of YHWH through the prophet. The literary frame of the introduction, bracketed by Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, seems to fade in chs. 22 and 52.

Jehoiachin is an awkward figure in almost every regard. Textually, the oracle against Jehoiachin itself divides in the middle, even though both parts need each other. Not surprisingly for the book of Jeremiah, the Hebrew and LXX texts have some differences, which contribute to the awkwardness of the passage. An apparent psalm

5 Leuchter notes the development of the “problem” of the kingship in its earliest manifestation under Saul in Mark Leuchter, “A King Like All The Nations: The Composition of I Sam 8,11–18,” Zeitschrift Für Die Alte Testamentliche Wissenschaft 117, no. 4 (February 20, 2006): 543–558. Note also “The presence of Huldah, a female prophet, forms a neat gender inclusio with Deborah, the first Mosaic prophet[ess] reported in the Dtr narrative following the period of the conquest under Joshua (Judges 4:4-5). Thus history is capped at both ends by prophets and executive rulers operating under Mosaic instruction and tradition...” Leuchter, “Jeremiah,” 72, n209.

6 LXX records Jehoiakim’s death in 4 Kgs 24:5-6, followed by the succession of his “son” Jehoiachin. There is some difficulty here with LXX in 24:8-15, 27: Does Ἰωακίμ refer to Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin? The name Ἰεχονίας appears in Chronicles. Ἰωακίμ and Ἰεχονίας appear in distinction to each other only in 2 Chron 36:8. The uncertainty of distinction reappears in 1 Esdras 1, which may explain the apparent discrepancy in Jer 22 (LXX). That Ἰωακίμ is used for Jehoiachin is confirmed in Jer 37:1, where it is used for “Coniah.”

7 “…the designation “Alexandrian” is merely a label for a nonmasoretic text type whose main witness is its Greek version, which probably arose in Egypt.” Hermann-Josef Stipp, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah: On the Formation of a Biblical Character,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 58, no. 4 (October 1996): 627. McKane’s careful delineation of method here is helpful: “Of the versions Sept. commands most interest and requires most attention, because it represents a shorter text than MT. Vulg., Pesh., and Targ., on the other hand, are mostly in accord with MT. It can be confidently assumed that Targ. always rests on MT, and the deviations of Vulg. and Pesh. from MT are not considerable…. every example has to be considered on its own merits, and the possibilities of abridgment or accident or not to be excluded in any consideration of the shorter Greek text.” McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, 1:xvi, xvii. In fact, the LXX betrays ideological tendencies to downplay references to Nebuchadnezzar as Yahweh’s servant, which could be one reason for shortening of particular texts. Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 159. Although, see also Emanuel Tov, “Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah,” in Le Livre De Jérémie: Le Prophète Et Son Milieu, Les Oracles Et Leur Transmission, ed. Pierre Bogaert, 1st ed., Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 54 (Louvain, Belgique: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 1981), 148. Probably Sharp is correct to claim that two traditions, both having authority, circulated simultaneously. Carolyn J. Sharp, “‘Take Another Scroll and Write’: A Study of the LXX and the MT of Jeremiah’s Oracles Against Egypt and Babylon,” Vetus Testamentum 47, no. 4 (October 1997): 508.
separates the oracle against Jehoiachin from the two previous oracles against Jehoiakim and Shallum. The promise of a renewed Davidide in 23:5-6 would be a likely candidate to follow Jehoiachin’s judgment oracle, but an oracle against the “shepherds” of Israel intruded. His uncle, Zedekiah, who should follow him chronologically in the oracle against the kings, appears at the top of the list in chapter 21. Many scholars have noted the ironic reversal between צִדְקִיָּהוּ (ṣidqeyahu, Zedekiah), who heads the oracles against the kings, and the promise of a new Davidide in Jeremiah 23:6, צִדְקֵנוּ (ṣidqenu, “our righteousness/justice”) which concludes them.8

“...It cannot be ruled out that this was originally a Jeremianic saying reflecting a period of enthusiasm about [Jehoiachin]. However, it is more likely to relate to Zerubbabel remaining in place later on the understanding that it now referred to a future figure associated with the return of all is real. Of course, even if so, there may lie here a retrospective play on the name Zedekiah, who as one signally failing to live up to his name, would eventually be replaced by someone worthy of it.” 9

Finally, one cannot help but notice that while the judgment against Jehoiachin is overwhelmingly severe in chapter 22, he appears to do rather well for himself when he appears again later in the book of Jeremiah, in Chronicles and the Babylonian records.10

8 This could possibly draw on older traditions about מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק (melḥi-ṣedek, Melchizedek) in Genesis 14:18, later appropriated messianically in Psalm 110:4, a figure who assumed great importance in eschatologically oriented groups such as the Qumran community, and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament. We will investigate this possibility further below.

9 Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 116.

10 Ibid., 80. “Few other biblical texts draw attention to their own development the way that the book of Jeremiah does. It is an assortment of collections that constantly form and dissolve their own boundaries and parameters (e.g. Jeremiah 1.1-25.13a; 27-29; 30-33; 26-45; 51.64; 52). This speaks to conscious redaction and expansion, something the book fully discloses in the narrative report of 36.32. The same chapter also informs us that this expansion was based on a single, definitive collection of Jeremiah’s oracles composed in 605… known among scholars as Jeremiah’s Urrolle.” Leuchter, Josiah’s Reform and Jeremiah’s Scroll, 6:11.
In the Gospels’ genealogies demonstrating the royal genealogy of Jesus, Jehoiachin appears as one of the ancestors of Jesus in Matthew (although he is not mentioned, rather disappears, along with the entire Solomonic line, from Luke!).

Many scholars have generally allowed these awkwardly constructed, contradictory, insignificant traditions of this king to remain in obscurity, except for covering him by way of obligation as a matter of course in a commentary. Yet, despite the admittedly difficult, and sometimes apparently haphazard, arrangement of parts of the book of Jeremiah, there are possibilities for making sense of this oracle in the overall final canonical shape of the book of Jeremiah. For example, in addition to the authors noted, Bob Becking has noted the similarity between Jeremiah’s sign-acts and cursing rituals in the empires surrounding Judah.\(^{11}\) Kelvin Friebel has observed the way in which these find dramatic use in Jeremiah as enacted prophecies, dramatic visual portrayals of the prophet’s proclamation of the divine word, and that these sign-acts came at transitional points when the people needed to adapt to their post-exile condition.\(^{12}\)

**Jeremiah’s Redaction of Jehoiachin**

There is a coherent way to read the otherwise-confusing story of Jehoiachin. After the exile of Jehoiachin, parochial disputes between the Babylonian exiles and the Judean remnant preserved and shaped what we now have as the book of Jeremiah to create a dramatic type, based on real events that would have been familiar to its readers, that manages somehow to slip the noose of the prophet. In so doing, Seraiah appears at the

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end of ch. 51 as the one who undoes the noose. In the Shaphanide understanding, initiated by the Baruch circle and the Alexandrian recension, and continued by the Seraiah circle and the Babylonian recension, the tragedy of the nation, Jeremiah’s own life story and that of Jehoiachin inextricably twine together. The sufferings of the nation and prophet repeat in the sufferings of the king, and yet, while Jeremiah does in obscurity in Egypt, the king and people will somehow find a new identity and existence in exile.\(^{13}\) The Shaphanides create a dramatic literary type rooted in the in the actual historical figure of Jehoiachin that extends throughout the postexilic period, extending into the New Testament and beyond.

**The “King Collection” of Oracles**

Job summarizes the issue:

“With regard to 22:1-5 (6a), the portrait of the prophet, emphasis on the Torah and intertextual references all point here to late composition, probably later than 21:1-10, with the revival both of the possibility of choice and hopes of the Davidic successor; later too than 22:6b-7, whose likely link with 21:14 it obstructs. A similarly late date should probably be assigned to 22:8f, where political interests of an earlier period have given way to didactic and ethical concerns. The continuation of the redaction interested primarily in Jehoiakim probably included 22:6b-7, where again the reference to Lebanon and cedars was adapted to apply to this king’s luxurious palace-building in Jerusalem. Jehoiachin is likely to have been condemned equally with Jehoiakim in the original collection. But the changing perspective associated with orientation of the tradition in favor of the golah of 597 led to alterations in the text of 22:24-30 of a very complex nature...”\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) For a nuanced approach to the history of scholarship of a possible relationship between Jeremiah and the suffering servant see Schipper, *Disability and Isaiah’s Suffering Servant*, 95–97.

\(^{14}\) Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 37.
It is to these complexities that we turn. At the very outset of the King Collection, we can see the hand of the Shaphanide editors. In the DtrH and the Chronicler, the King Collection follows a chronological order. Here, it clearly follows a topical arrangement, and, as Kidner observes, it almost certainly received this arrangement in the Shaphanide editing process.\textsuperscript{15} Note as well the theological principle introduced in Zedekiah’s request: he asks for miraculous intervention without reference to covenant obedience or disobedience. Yahweh denies the request, but apparently uses the same principle in for judgment against the final named king, Jehoiachin, in 22:24-30. The three intervening kings receive judgments based on covenant disobedience. However, the principle of intervention from Yahweh, in either judgment or mercy, unrelated to obedience or disobedience to the Deuteronomic code, is the theological principle that determines the topical ordering of this passage as the hinge between the old world of the Davidic monarchy and the new royalty of the enigmatic “Branch.”. It is the same principle, we will see, that runs throughout the final Shaphanide editing in Babylon of chapters 45-52.

\textsuperscript{15} We note that the polemics of exile reflect scribal activity similar to what Jeremiah himself would have engaged in, and is dateable to the time of the prophet himself. “... there is great coherence between the text associated with the prophet and those often credited to other or later writers.” Leuchter, “Jeremiah,” 5, 8–9. In addition, “It is unlikely that the main redactions of these particular Jeremianic prose traditions took place significantly later than the exilic period, notwithstanding the protestations of those who favor the Persian period as the most likely time for the editorial work on the Deutero-Jeremianic prose. Analogues between the controversies depicted in Ezra-Nehemiah and the political programs of the editors of the Jeremianic prose are not as transparent as Carroll suggests. He may be right that the rejection of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24-30 may have stemmed from a political party opposed to Zerubbabel’s authority claim. But he overreaches when he cites the difficult Zechariah 13:2-6 as evidence of the ‘bitter hostility against prophets in the third century (or later)’ and proposes that the material in Jeremiah concerning the prophets ‘may well be part of the anti-prophetic polemics of the Persian period,’ when there are no traces of this in Ezra-Nehemiah (cf. the benign Ezra 5:1-2 and 6:14).” Carolyn J. Sharp, Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in Deutero-Jeremianic Prose, Old Testament Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 98–99. Further, “… editor II did not distort significantly the message of the prophet as handed down to him. True, he added a great deal and changed a lot, but as a rule, these changes were not radical. Furthermore, editor II did not rewrite the scroll that contained only authentic Jeremianic utterances, but he found the deuteronomistic edition of Jeremiah’s sayings and biography so that much of what he added was based on an already rewritten book…” Tov, “Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah,” 150, 154.
Of course, all of this in the King Collection is merely a lead up to the enigmatic “Branch” in 23:5-6 who will keep Torah and secure blessings for himself and a renewed Israel. However, this belongs to the open-ended future that extends beyond chapter 52 into future acts of God into which Jeremiah and the Shaphanides do not have specific, identifiable details.
Table 3: The King Collection (Jer 21:11-23:8)

| Scribe with Jeremiah | 21:17 The word18 which came to pass to Jeremiah from the Lord,19 while king Zedekiah was sending to him Pashur, son of Malchiah and Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah the priest, saying 2 “Please inquire Yahweh for the benefit of us,20 for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is making war upon us. Perhaps Yahweh will do with us according to all his astonishing works21 and he will ascend from upon us.” 3 And Jeremiah said to them, “Thus you will say to Zedekiah: 4 Thus said Yahweh, God of Israel, ‘Behold, I am making the instruments of war turn around, which are in your hand, with which you are fighting |

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16 The translation is based on the MT found in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia : With Westminster Hebrew Morphology, 4.2 ed. (Stuttgart; Glenside PA: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary, 1996). The oracle under consideration, Jer. 22:24-30 appears in the LXX in the same order and with little textual variation, except for those noted below. Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of,” 714.

17 Kidner observes that the topical arrangement of these oracles probably connects to the additions to the writing noted in 36:32. Derek Kidner, The Message of Jeremiah: Against Wind and Tide, The Bible Speaks Today: The Old Testament (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987), 83–84.

18 Bright points out an obvious fact, but often missed, that these oracles are the clearest statement on Jeremiah's views into the institution of monarchy and its place in the divine economy. John Bright, Jeremiah, vol. 21, 2nd ed., The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1965), 144. We take up this point in the appendices.


20 Roncace may give too much credit to Zedekiah here. “According to 37:5, the Babylonians had withdrawn from the city. Thus, it appears that Zedekiah’s hopes for divine intervention were coming to fruition. If Zedekiah did interpret the withdrawal of the Babylonians precisely as Yahweh’s intervention which he expressed hope for in 21:2, then it is noteworthy that he would call on Jeremiah when the siege lifted. Surely, it seemed as if the prophet had been wrong; the mass destruction foretold in 21:3–7 appeared to have passed them by. Thus, when read in conjunction with ch. 21, Zedekiah’s consulting Jeremiah at this time seems particularly commendable.” Roncace, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem, 42. Alternatively, more likely, it is a cynical way of showing up Jeremiah.

the king of Babylon,
and the Chaldeans who are laying siege upon you,
from outside to the wall,
and I will gather them to the middle of this city.

5 And I, I will surely fight with you
with an outstretched hand
and a strong arm,
in anger and venom and in great wrath.

6 And I will cause all those who dwell in this city,
both man and beast,
to be struck with a great disease,
and they will die.

7 And afterward –

I will give
Zedekiah, king of Judah,
and his servants
and the people
and those remaining in this city
from the disease,
from the sword,
and from the famine
into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,
and in the hand of their enemies
and in the hand of those seeking their lives,
and they will be struck by the mouth of the sword;
they will not take pity on them
and they will not show mercy
and they will not love.”

Utterance of Yahweh! –

8 And to this people, you will say,
“Behold, I am placing before you the way of the living and the way of
death.”

9 Those dwelling in this city will die
by the sword
and by the famine
and by the disease;
and he who goes out and fell upon the Chaldeans who are besieging

Jeremiah

22 "For an analysis of the reworking of Jeremiah … 21:11b-12a in 22:1-5, see Rofe, ‘Studies in the
Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 532n.

23 This could also still be the scribe.

24 Cf. Deuteronomy 30:15.
upon you,
his life will become his to be plunder.  

10 Utterance of Yahweh! –

“In the hand of the king of Babylon you will be given
and he will burn her with fire.”

11 And to the house of the king of Judah, hear the word of Yahweh!

12 House of David, thus said Yahweh:
‘Deliver judgment in the morning
and liberate what has been robbed from the hand of an oppressor.
Thus will my rage go out as fire and consume and will not be
quenched;
before me is the evil of their deeds.

13 Behold, I am against you, dweller of the valley, rock of the plain –
Utterance of Yahweh! –

Those who are saying,
“Who will be shattered upon us
and who will come in our habitations?”

14 And I will visit upon you according to the fruit of your deeds –
Utterance of Yahweh! –

and will cause a fire to be kindled in her wood
and it will consume everything surrounding her.”

Jeremiah before king

22:1 Thus said Yahweh,

“Go down to the house of the king of Judah,
and there you will say this word; 2 And you will say,
‘Hear the word of Yahweh,
king of Judah,
who is sitting on the throne of David,
you
and your servants
and your people who are going in these gates,

3 Thus said Yahweh,

“Do judgment and righteousness
and liberate what has been stolen from the hand of an oppressor,
and a sojourner, orphan and widow do not mistreat;”

People

let us not do violence,
and the blood of the innocent let us not pour out in this place.

Yahweh

4 For if you surely do this word
then they will come in these gates,

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25 The LXX differs considerably in length from the MT in this passage. "The consensus of scholars is that the MT represents an expansionist text in most of these places." Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:284.

26 The addressees are unnamed. Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 22:1. This could have been either Jehoiachin or Zedekiah.
the kings sitting according to David,
upon his throne,
riding in chariots and horses,²⁷
he
and his servant
and his people.
5 And if you do not do these words, by myself I swear
that this house will come to be a ruin.

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Jeremiah²⁸
6 For thus said Yahweh,
"On account of the house of the king of Judah,
Gilead you are to me,
head of Lebanon,
if I will not²⁹ make the cities a wilderness which are not inhabited.
7 And I will consecrate upon you ruination,
each man and his utensils,
and they will cut down the choicest of your cedars,
and they will make them fall upon the fire.
8 And many nations will cross over upon this city,
and they will say, each man to his neighbor,
'Why did Yahweh do according to this to this great city?'
9 And they will say,
'On account of the fact that
they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh their God
and they worshiped other gods
and they served them.'

People
10 Let us not sorrow unto dying,
and let us not wander aimlessly to him;
weep profoundly in regard to the one going,

²⁷ Note the contrast with Zechariah's picture of the messianic King riding on an ass. "The fact that he rides upon an ass [in Zechariah] instead of a horse or chariot (Jeremiah 22:4) suggests that he has won the victory and returns to Jerusalem in peace." George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, ed. Donald Hagner, Rev. ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1993), 134. If Ladd is correct, then the position of the king here, even if Zedekiah’s request receives an answer, will still be one of war, despite the request of Zechariah.

²⁸ This could also be the scribe, because it uses the scribal formula, “For thus said Yahweh….” However, the context of the opening of the chapter seems to indicate that this is Jeremiah speaking again.

²⁹ Gesenius notes the presence of the oath formula here, but profess puzzlement with it. “It is indeed difficult to understand such self-imprecations, put into the mouth of God, as in Dt 1:34 f., Is 14:24, 22:14, Jer 22:6, Ez 3:6, 35:6, Ps 95:11.” Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, ed. E. Kautzsch and A. E Cowley, CD-ROM, 2nd English ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 471–472. However, this is not so hard in light of the oath-ceremony by God in Gen 15, where he walks between the animal-pieces as a sign of self-imprecation, although there is scholarly debate on this point.
for he will not return any more,  
and see the land where he was born.

Scribe 30

11 For thus said Yahweh to Shallum, son of Josiah, king of Judah,  
who was ruling in place of Josiah his father,  
who went forth from this place,  
“He will not return there anymore.”

12 For in the place where they exiled him,  
there he will die,  
and this land he will not see any more.

13 Alas, he was building his house with what is not righteous  
and his roof-chambers with what is not judgment;  
with his neighbor he will serve for nothing,  
and his work will not be given to him.

14 The one who is saying,  
‘I will build for myself a sizable house and spacious roof-chamber,’  
and he will cut windows for himself  
and will be paneled in cedar  
and anointed in vermilion —

15 What are you ruling, for you are angering yourself over cedar?  
Your father, did he not eat and drink and do judgment and righteousness?  
Then good was his.

16 He pled the cause of the poor and needy.  
Then was not the knowledge of that with me?  
– Utterance of Yahweh!  

17 For your eyes and your heart are nothing;  
for if, on account of your unjust gain,  
and on account of pouring out the blood of the innocent,  
and on account of the oppression,  
and on account of making a crushing,  
18 therefore,  
thus said Yahweh to Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah,

30 This could appear here because it reinforces the message about the house of David.


33 Jehoiakim’s judgment appears to be the result of his father’s wrongdoing as well as his own sins. This makes the complete lack of covenant wrongdoing attributed to Coniah in the verses following so striking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh</th>
<th>20</th>
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| Send to Lebanon and cry out, and in Bashan give your voice, and cry out from Abarim, for all your lovers were smashed.  
21 I spoke to you in your ease; you said you will not listen. This is your way from your youth, for you do not listen to my voice.  
22 All those shepherding you will shepherd wind, and your lovers, in captivity they will go for then you will be ashamed and humiliated from all your evil.  
23 Dweller in Lebanon, nested in cedar, how you will groan when pains, writhing, come upon you. |

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34 “An ass (TEV “donkey”) was considered an “unclean” animal by the Israelites (Lev 11:1–8; Deut 14:3–8). When a donkey died, others dragged the outside the city and left it for wild animals and birds to eat. Thus this verse is a bitter and sarcastic commentary on the fate of Jehoiakim.” Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, CD-ROM, UBS Handbook Series; Helps for Translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 483–484.

35 Carroll believes there is evidence here of another one of the Oracles against the Nations. "The phrase 'אֲנִי מָנַשֶּׁהָ, יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'O one enthroned in the Lebanon,' would seem to indicate one of the city-states such as Tyre, Sidon or Byblos. Thus, some commentaries take the form to be an Oracle against Foreign Nations (Carroll). However, because similar imagery is used in verses 6–7 in reference to the house of the King of Judah, and because all the other oracles within this section of chapters 21-24 are directed against Judah, Jerusalem, and are leaders, it seems better to understand this Oracle is referring to Jerusalem personified, as was the situation and 21:13-14." Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., *WBC 26*, 26:314. Craigie, et.al. are probably right, but the textual connections are important in the MT, because the Oracles against the Nations precede the final mention of Jehoiachin.

36 “…addresses a female but her identity is uncertain. Carroll (1986: 434–5) believes this poem to be an oracle originally addressed to Lebanon, but some of the language echoes poems against the bride of 2:1–3:25, who has been unfaithful from her youth…” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer 22:20.

37 "That nation shall rise against nation (Mark 13:8) is also said in Isaiah 19:2; famines, cosmic catastrophes at the end of time are not only mentioned in the apocalyptic books of *Enoch and Ezra*, but also in passages like Isaiah 8:21ff; 13:13; 24:17; Ezekiel 5:12ff; Joel 2:30, 31, and others. It seems that the
as she who is bearing a child. 38

24 As I live 39

– Utterance of Yahweh! –

For if Coniah, son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, would be a signet-ring 40 upon my right hand,
then from there I would tear you 41 off.
25 And I would give you 42
into the hand of those seeking your life,
into the hand of the one who fills you with fear in his presence,
and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,
and into the hand of the Chaldeans.
26 And I would hurl you and your 43 mother who bore you 44
upon another land where you were not born,
and there you will die.

People? 45
27 And upon the land upon which they 46 are lifting their lives 47 to return,


38 Here is another important difference from the Septuagint. The LXX end of Jeremiah 22:23 is: ἐν τῷ ἐλθεῖν σοι ὀδύνας, ὀδύνας ὡς τικτούσης ("…you will mourn in your going because of childbirth-pains as she who bears a child").

39 Craigie, et. al., believe that this is not a judgment-speech but an oath, which would support later rabbinical interpretation as noted above. Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:318. However, is such a move necessary? This requires viewing the events in the Oracle as accomplished events. I am more inclined to agree with Westermann and Holliday here so that one can leave the speech in the present tense.


41 Note the change to the 2nd-person, away from the 3rd-person address used for Shallum and Jehoiakim. Note also that the masculine singular applies to Coniah. Feminine singular would apply to the people. Note the feminine singular participle that begins v. 23.

42 Note again the masculine singular.

43 Note again masculine singular suffix.


45 Cf. Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:322.
there they will not return. Why is this man Coniah a vessel which has been despised, shattered; if a vessel in whom there is no joy, why were they hurled, he and his seed and caused him to be thrown out upon the land which they did not know?

28 Why is this man Coniah a vessel which has been despised, shattered; if a vessel in whom there is no joy, why were they hurled, he and his seed and caused him to be thrown out upon the land which they did not know?

Jeremiah 29 Land, land, LAND! Hear the word of Yahweh! 30 Thus said Yahweh,

46 Note the shift back to the third-person, referring to Coniah and the queen mother. On the other hand, does the third person here refer to exiles remaining in Jerusalem who had set their hopes on the king?

47 As noted in the body, here and Jer. 44:14 are the only places in the MT where the verb נֶשָּׁא appears in the Piel. In all other places where the construction נֶפֶשׁ נֶשָּׁא appears, it is in the Qal. In the Piel’s basic meaning of causation of a state (Bruce K Waltke and Michael Patrick O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, CD-ROM (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 400.), then, in effect, God is relieving himself of responsibility for their deaths.

48 Note the LXX, which seems to represent a different textual tradition: εἰς δὲ τὴν γῆν, ἢν αὐτοὶ εὔχονται ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτῶν, οὐ μὴ ἀποστρέψωσιν. “But in regard to the land where they are praying for their lives, that they may certainly not be put to flight (note the subjunctive final verb as the language of desire/prayer)…” This would appear to lead directly into v. 29 and the oracle against Coniah. The choice of verb by the LXX writers is puzzling. Why not λαμβάνω [ψυχή] (=kill) or αἱρώ [ψυχή] (=pray) as the verb? Also, Plant points out that “The phrase נֶפֶשׁ נֶשָּׁא is a distinctive of the Jeremiah prose tradition, occurring in 11:21; 19:7, 9; 21:7; 22:25; 34:20, 21; 38:16; 44:30 (x 2); 46:26; 49:37. Those whose life is sought vary...” Plant, Good Figs, Bad Figs, 63.

49 Note the three paragraph markers in this passage. Note an apparent fourth grammatical stop in v. 29 (see note below).

50 This follows the MT where the ָּ הִ is interrogative. Victor P. Hamilton, “460 ָּ הִ,” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K Walke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980); Waltke and O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, 452. LXX has a declarative: “ἠτιμώθη Ιεχονίας, (Jehoiachin has been dishonored…)”

51 Craigie, et. al. note the briefer LXX version as likely older because “…the longer Hebrew text seems to obscure the meter." J. A Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, ed. R. K. Harrison, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 484. Or could this be an indication that Craigie's (Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26.) distinction between the prose of 24-27 and poetry of 28-30 is not so clear cut after all?

52 Alternatively, “If a utensil is not delightful, though it be him…” taking the ב as concessive. Thus, the pronominal suffix would refer to Jehoiachin. If taken in the sense of “with,” then the pronominal suffix would refer to Yahweh. In either case, it does not significantly change the displeasure with Coniah. Cf. Jeremiah 25:34 נֶפֶשׁ נֶשָּׁא

53 This is apparently the people, given that the king’s family appears in the next question.

“Write this man childless; a strong man will not succeed in his day, for there will not succeed from his seed a man sitting on the throne of David and exercising authority anymore in Judah.””

23:1 Alas, shepherding, destroying, and scattering the flock of my pasture

– Utterance of Yahweh!

2 Therefore, thus said Yahweh, God of Israel on account of the shepherds who are shepherding my people, “You have scattered my flock and thrust them away, and you did not visit them. Behold, I am visiting evil upon you on account of your deeds.”

Yahweh

3 And I, I will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands where you thrust them away, and I will bring them back to their abode, and they will be fruitful and they will increase.

4 And I will raise up upon them shepherds and they will shepherd them and they will not fear any more, and they will not be dismayed, and they will not be visited.

Yahweh Utterance of Yahweh!

55 Note the plural imperative – bringing to view a succession of bureaucrats!

56 The destruction of his "house" in 22.5, apparently repeated again by Jesus in Luke 13:34–35 NRSV) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' ” Note also Jesus' adoption of the personification of "mother Jerusalem" similar to the female personification in Lamentations 1-2.

57 The noun and both participles are singular; thus, I have taken them to refer to the current resident of the throne, Jehoiachin, so that the line of David will not advance beyond him.

58 I have taken both participles as substantives, referring to Jehoiachin.

59 Note three anarthrous participles.
Utterance of Yahweh!

Yahweh 23:5 Behold! Days are coming –

– and I will establish to David a righteous branch 60
and a king will rule
and he will consider
and he will do judgment and righteousness in the land.

6 In his days,
Judah will be liberated
and Israel will dwell to the security,

and this is his name which he will call him:
Yahweh our Righteousness. 61

7 Thus, behold! Days are coming –

– and they will not say any longer,
“As Yahweh lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the
land of Egypt,”
8 rather, “As Yahweh lives, who brought up and who led the
seed of the house of Israel from the land of the north and from
all the lands to which I62 banished them,”
and they will return to their grounds.

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60 This phrase generated a good deal of discussion of messianic references in rabbinic literature. See Midrash Rabbah, Numbers XVIII, 21, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, Babylonian Talmud, Baba Bathra 75b, Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations I, 16 § 51, Midrash on Psalms, Book One, Psalm 21, 3, Midrash on Proverbs, Chapter 19, 21. The general scholarly consensus is that this refers to a future, ideal, but unidentified king from David’s line. For various discussions and background to the phrase in the ancient near east, see Brettler, God Is King, 47; Bracke, “Branch [Heb Ṣemaḥ (צֶמַח)];” Darrell L Bock, “Messiah, Messianism,” ed. Craig G Bartholomew, Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright, Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible (London: SPCK, 2005); Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, The IVP Bible Background Commentary, bk. Jer 23:5. The theological use of this passage by the Deuteronomic redactors is summarized in Childs, Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments, 178; von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:268.

61 “The name may be a play on the name of Zedekiah, regent in Jerusalem from 597 to 587 B.C.” Paul J Achtemeier, ed., “Jehovah-tsidkenu,” Harper’s Bible Dictionary (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985). Note again the messianic theme in the rabbis: “A. Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Yohanan, “There are three who are called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, and these are they: the righteous, the Messiah, and Jerusalem… “The Messiah: ‘And this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord is our righteousness’ (Jer. 23: 6).” Jacob Neusner, “Bavli Baba Batra, Chapter Five, Folios 73a-91b,” in Babylonian Talmud, vol. 15, CD-ROM (Rio, WI: Ages Library, 2006), 12.

62 “In verse 8 RSV follows the text of the Septuagint, which has he in place of “I” of the Hebrew. For the ancient Hebrews the shift in pronoun was most probably not as difficult as it is for contemporary readers. GECL, FRCL, and NIV maintain the third person pronoun without a note.” Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, UBS Handbook Series 273 (New York: United Bible Societies, 2003), 496.
Neither Oath nor Lament but Liturgy

Jeremy Schipper has argued that both rabbinic and critical scholars have a tendency to supply information from outside the text to ameliorate the very severe judgment against Jehoiachin. To do this, they identify the oracle as either an oath, which God can rescind in the heavenly council, or a lament that shows God having pity on a suffering king.63

As we saw in the introduction, the NRSV, following standard interpretations of the Bible and, indeed, the BHS itself, understand 24-27 to be Hebrew prose, and 28-30 to be poetry. However, as we saw in the translation above, there is certainly parallelism, as well as rhythmic and stylistic features that make this not merely pure prose, but prose interpolated by poetic forms. This perhaps is what led Bernhard Duhm to dissect the oracle so thoroughly. Yet, as we have seen, even the poetic portions of the book show signs of editorial work, probably designed for liturgical use by the exiles, such as we find in Jer 52. These liturgical markers, identified by the use of first-, second-and third-person singular and plural pronouns, is most obvious in the oracles that conclude the book (45-51), but can already be seen in the oracles that open the book (1-20).64

If we understand the form of the oracle as neither oath nor lament, but rather some sort of dramatized liturgy for an exilic community, it removes the need to supply any explanation that would ameliorate the tension between love and rejection in the oracle. The questions in the oracle do not need answers but remembrance. As the penultimate addition to the King Collection before the final section announcing a general woe against

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63 Schipper, “‘Exile Atones for Everything’.”

64 See “The Liturgical Setting of A/Poetry” in ch. 1 above. For examples, see Appendix A.
leaders and the announcement of the “Branch” (23:1-8), it has been placed here for liturgical remembrance in expectation for a coming Davidide.

**Comment**

The “King Collection” is an appropriate and unsurprising addendum to the first edition of Jeremiah.65 Coming as it does at the end of the long slow decline of the kingship in Israel, documented in both the DtrH and the Chronicler, and the history of increasing conflict between kings and prophets, this judgment oracle against Jehoiachin is merely expected. It is the form and content of the oracle itself that is unexpected. In its context, some oracle like this had to come sometime, and it had to follow someone.

Nevertheless, there are factors about this oracle that are both significant and difficult for later interpreters. Jehoiachin appears in conflicting ways. Is he beloved or rejected by Yahweh? His father, Jehoiakim, whose history we know more about, would have been a more likely candidate for such a stark oracle. The oracle itself has some striking features:

1. The word of the Lord appears three times in the six verses, each one building on the other and finally rising to a crescendo in the stark declaration that Jehoiachin shall be “recorded childless.”

2. The rhetorical form allows no room for other options. The mention of the queen mother is important for establishing any future genealogy, so her judgment also makes the entire judgment complete in prophetically snuffing out the line of Jehoiachin.

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65 Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of,” 713.
3. Broadening the focus a bit, in Hittite culture the king’s mother bears the title “the mother of the god,” (see textual notes above). This could be a slight tip toward a nascent messianism, or at least could have paved that way for later generations of interpreters to begin to lean toward messianism.

4. Jer. 24:27 and Jer. 44:14 are the only places in the MT where the verb נָשַׁא appears in the Piel. In all other places where the construction נֶפֶשׁ נָשַׁא appears, it is in the Qal. If we follow the Piel’s basic meaning of causation of a state then, in effect, God is relieving himself of responsibility for their deaths (see textual notes) by transferring the responsibility to their own choices. Yet they appear to have no choice in the matter at all.

Later interpreters have struggled with the issue of genealogical succession for the Davidic monarchy, if indeed it is to survive exile. The Chronicler (1 Chr. 3:16-17) places Jehoiachin back into the royal genealogy, apparently in contradiction to Jeremiah’s oracle. Matthew follows the Chronicler by placing Jehoiachin (Ἰεχονίας, Jeconiah in Matthew) in his genealogy for Jesus but pointedly leaves out references to his father and grandfather (Matt 1:11). Nevertheless, the later prophetic tradition, e.g., Haggai, believed that some new path would need to be found, probably through a reinterpreted messianic Davidide (the “Branch” of 23:5-6,) to once again have the king of the people of Yahweh (Haggai 2:23).

The oracle creates a problem. Given Jeremiah’s frustrations with the kingship, it is not at all surprising that some king will meet a bitter end. Based on the oracle against Coniah, it appears that God has repealed his promise to David, that there is no future for
Judah, and certainly not for the nation as a whole. Yet questions abound. How is it that God could make a seemingly inviolable covenant with David and then appear to cut off? The promise immediately following the oracle against Jehoiachin seems to imply that Yahweh is about to enter into not just a new covenant with the king, but initiate a new exodus – and perhaps even a new people! Yet in chapter 24, Jehoiachin appears to be among the good remnant of the exile (Jer 24:1-10) in contrast to the bad figs, his uncle Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar installed when he exiled Jehoiachin. For reasons unspecified, Jehoiachin must bear the humiliation of the last king in the line of David, according to the Jeremiah text’s ordering of the last kings of Judah. There is no specified fault in him, and some interpreters feel that verse 24 may communicate some measure of divine favor. Yet he, his family and his nation must suffer exile; no prayers for deliverance find an answer, and there is no possibility under any circumstances of a 

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66 Paolo Sacchi believes that because the Babylonians gave Jehoiachin the title "son of a vassal king" rather than sharru ("vassal king") on Babylonian ration tablet C, that the Babylonians intended to reestablish the normal line of descent in Judah once the situation became more politically stable. Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, rev. of 2000 JSOTS 285 (London ; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 52. This is certainly possible, although without comparative examples is difficult to prove.

67 We need to remember that this was still a debated point as pro-Egypt and pro-Babylon factions within Israel struggled over which empire, Egypt or Babylon, to support. Thus, the legitimacy of the last king is an important topic in the polemics within Israel at exile. However, as Avioz points out, Babylon also used this tension to keep Zedekiah under control. Cf. the discussion in Michael Avioz, “I Sat Alone”: *Jeremiah Among the Prophets* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 12, 47–48. As Avioz observes, while there was always a group that envisioned Jehoiachin’s return, Jeremiah never encouraged these hopes, thus making ch. 52 all the more important in understanding the overall thrust of Jeremiah’s message in its historical context. Cf. the discussion in Ibid., 54–59. For a more in-depth discussion of the political struggle from the perspective of post-colonial theory, cf. Steed Vernyl Davidson, *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah*, 1st ed., Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 542 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 46–51. Steed believes that ch. 52 ends with an expectation of reinstatement, but the relationship between the Shaphanides and Jeremiah as one of unqualified support for the man and his message makes it unlikely that they would so obviously add a chapter at the end of the words of Jeremiah that directly contradicts his entire message to Jehoiachin. Cf., Ibid., 130, 144, 172. Here is where post-colonial interpretive strategies may give too much room to hopes of future political autonomy that Jeremiah never seems to envision.
change in the mind of God. Even the promise of 23:3-8 holds no consolation for Jehoiachin, whose royal line will disappear, whose life is a shattered vessel destined for the trash heap of history. Is he a beloved significant ring (verse 24) or an object of judgment (the “despised vessel” of verse 28)?

The first three verses of the oracle, normally given as prose in English translations, appear to show that Coniah (Jehoiachin) does have some sense of favor with God at the beginning.\(^68\) The signet ring was a symbol of royal authority and something precious to the king in the ancient near East.\(^69\) Yet, Yahweh appears quite willing to remove him. Jeremiah confronts king after king for their rebellion against the covenant and rebellion against the prophetic word through Jeremiah. Jehoiachin’s own father, Jehoiakim, received condemnation for his adultery (spiritual, physical or both?) and his lifelong refusal to listen to the word of the Lord. Yet Coniah must suffer terrifying judgment, but receives no record of his crimes. In contrast to the others, he appears to suffer for no fault of his own. On one read of the text, it even appears that he received better treatment by the Babylonians, representing their god Marduk, than his own god! The Babylonian Chronicle, discovered in 1958, confirms that later Jehoiachin was a recipient of great favor from the Babylonian king, receiving 20 times the standard amount

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\(^{68}\) For a discussion of the relationship between prose and poetry in this section, see Bright, *Jeremiah*, 1965, 21:144.

of oil, even though he may never return to his homeland. For all of his suffering, the king of Babylon (and Yahweh himself? or Marduk?) apparently did not forget about him.

Yet, in verse 28, Yahweh describes Coniah as a despised vessel, fit only to be shattered and thrown away. For reasons left unexplained, Coniah apparently was an object of God’s favor (even if only because he represents the line of David) who was not charged with any crimes, who yet must bear the penalty for the entire covenant breaking of king and people for many years pass. At first blush it could appear that the two questions in verse 28 are rhetorical questions with the answer embedded in them (i.e., Coniah is despised and shattered because he is not delightful; otherwise he would not be thrown away). Yet the broader concerns of the passage make it more likely that these are not rhetorical questions, but questions of unanswerable regret.

The first two questions imply a negative response. No, Coniah was not despised above other rulers; no, he was not a utensil that no one desired (i.e., yes, some did desire him). Nevertheless, judgment has become inevitable... The image of this verse is that of a useless, perhaps cracked, pottery vessel that is flung away, as one might throw trash on the garbage dump. The question is put: Is Coniah such a despised, undesirable utensil? The implied answer is: No, he is not. Then the next question follows: Why then was he hurled into exile? No answer to that question is forthcoming.71

For a prophet who identified Jehoiachin with the “good figs, very good” of the Israelite remnant in ch. 24, the ambiguity is striking. One could argue that this represents a different hand, or author, in the text, or that Jeremiah changes his mind. However, noting the ambiguity of the language in the judgment oracle itself helps us see that this is

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70 Berridge, “Jehoiachin,” 661–663.

71 Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:322.
not necessary to make harmonize the text and ameliorate the tension between love and rejection.

There are still many unanswered questions surrounding the bitter end of Jehoiachin in the narrative of Israel’s kingship, that make him some example of undeserved royal suffering. The indictment against Jehoiachin is not an indictment for his own crimes, but rather a decisive statement by Yahweh that the Davidic line has come to an ignominious end. It is, indeed, a “severe indictment.”

It is possible to conclude that Coniah is included in the general oracle against the kingship beginning in 21:11 and concluding in 23:1-2. Perhaps he is just as guilty of all the general crimes enumerated there. Perhaps – but it is striking that of the three kings singled out for judgment, he is the only one to whom no personal crimes are attributed. If the others received indictment for specific crimes, it certainly seems that the last king in the line will not escape a public exposure of his sins.

Contrast the blessing on the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35, blessed because of some minor matters of obedience to their father, which had no relationship to the Mosaic covenant. Yet Jehoiachin, who in fact does surrender to Babylon (as his father Jehoiakim did not do, as Jeremiah had commanded him) cannot escape judgment in any case. The fact that no crimes appear in the record against him, his youthfulness and the shortness of his tenure argue that Coniah receives judgment for reasons unexplained. The Davidic monarchy concludes based on no ringing legal indictment of the current king. Later readers can only ponder his bitter and possibly undeserved end. This makes it even more

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likely that Jehoiachin appears in Jeremiah as the end of the Davidic line because of the
tragedy of his case, not the perfidy of his character.

To whom then does the legacy of the tragic figure of the king point, if not to
himself and his offspring as an example of how corrupted character in the king brings
ruin upon his people? The answer appears in the cadenced diatribe against Coniah in
three oracles. The passage is cadenced by the references to the word of the Lord, divided
by three paragraph markers, and by a fourth grammatical marker: the threefold repetition
of וְרֶץאֶ֥ (eretz, land), the final time in pause for emphasis.

Three times, and in three different ways the word of the Lord comes against
Coniah. The phrase נְאֻם־יְהוָה appears over 250 times in the Old Testament, mostly in the
prophets, but in Jeremiah more than any other does. It usually refers to a judgment-
oracle, delivered often with the same oath formula that opens verse 24: חַי־אָנִי (hai ani, as
I live).

Thus, the pathos heightens. Coniah is the signet ring of Yahweh, the symbol of
his royal authority, and the hand that executes his judgments on earth. Yet now Yahweh
places him upon the hand of the king of Babylon by Yahweh himself. The contrast could
not be more shocking. Yahweh has not only cut loose the last remaining of the line of
David to sit on the throne but has now installed him as the symbol of the authority of
their oppressor. Indeed, in a tragic sense, this will become true as Coniah is a captive by
the king of Babylon, and his people, even against his wishes, must follow him there.

In verse 26, the imagery shifts from the “hand” to the “land.” Though there is no phonetic similarity in Hebrew as there is in English, the meaning easily translates, and it has now become darker. Lest Coniah and his people think that because he is now the signet ring of Nebuchadrezzar, he will enjoy some sort of privileged position in Babylon, Yahweh makes it clear that the judgment-oracle does not stop there. Yahweh merely flings him and his family (especially his mother, most likely queen Nehushta) into the land of Babylon. Yahweh does not put them into a position of privilege. Further, there is no promise of restoration to the land – rather, they will die.

Then the oracle shifts into the plural in verse 27: what happens to the king happens to others as well. The plural could refer to the descendants of Coniah, but there is nothing in the first oracle that would indicate that.\(^{74}\) It is possible that the plural refers only to Coniah and his mother, but none of the translations takes it that way. Given that the focus shifts to the “land” רֶץ, it is likely that the plural refers to those who will follow the king into exile in 587, and thus yet another example of the king serving as the representative of the people.\(^{75}\)

What are we to make of the construction אֶת־נַפְשָׁם מְנַשְּׂאִים (מְנַשְּׂאִים אֶת־נַפְשָׁם, those who are lifting up/forgiving/praying for their lives)? The LXX takes this as the language of prayer:\(^{76}\)

\[ εἰς δὲ τὴν γῆν, ἢν αὐτοὶ εὐχονται ταῖς ψυχαῖς αὐτῶν, οὐ μὴ ἀποστρέψωσιν \]

\(^{74}\) It is true that the second oracle contains a reference to “his seed,” but it is unlikely that that meaning translates back to verse 27.

\(^{75}\) The word occurs 5 times from 26-29.

\(^{76}\) This may well represent a different textual tradition.
“But in regard to the land where they are praying for their lives, [praying] that they may certainly not be put to flight...”

This would appear to lead directly into v. 29 and the oracle against Coniah. Still, the choice of verb by the LXX writers is puzzling. Why not λαμβανο [ψυχη] (lambano psyche, kill) or αιρω [ψυχη] (airo psyche, pray) as the verb? It is likely that the choice of ευχομαι (eucomai, pray, or sometimes, vow) is intended to reflect their belief that God will still answer their prayers to return to the land. Thus, the LXX, probably representing the thought of the Shaphanide circle associated with Baruch in Egypt, appears to include remnants of the theology of the Davidic monarchy of those who were still in Judah, something that the final version in Babylon under the Shaphanide circle associated with Seraiah removes.

Translators, likely taking their cue from the LXX, give את-נפשם מנשאים the meaning of prayer or desire (this is the normal translation in the Psalms). Let us leave aside the influence of the Psalms for the moment, where it seems that the context would make it likely that translators would interpret it in the sense of prayer or desire. Then it appears from the other appearances in the MT that the primary meaning of this construction is to “lift up a life” in the sense of taking life away.78

As we just noted above, here and Jer. 44:14 are the only places in the MT where the verb נוש [nasa, lift] appears in the Piel in the construction את-נפשם מנשאים. In all other places where the construction ואת-נפש (nasa nephesh, lift up a life) appears, the verb

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77 note the subjunctive final verb as the language of desire/prayer.

78 This is certainly the case in 2 Sam. 14:14, Job 13:14, and Prov 19:18. The other cases: Jer. 44:14, Hos. 4:8, Deut. 24:15, Psa. 24:4, 25:1, 86:4, and 143:8 could bear either interpretation. Perhaps this may explain the Psalmist then as crying out “Lord, I’m putting my life at risk for you/I’m taking my life in my hands for you.”
is in the Qal. In the Piel here it means something like “making their lives lifted up”, whereby, in effect, God may be relieving himself of responsibility for their deaths, for they are the ones who are taking their lives in their own hands by refusing to submit to Yahweh in Babylon and pining for a return to Judah. This then would explain that those exiles in Babylon who were expecting the king’s return — and thus anticipating their own better fortunes after return — were actually taking their lives in their hands! Those who hope in vain for Coniah’s return put their lives in mortal danger, figuratively committing suicide because of a futile hope.

Verse 28 is one of the most difficult to translate. It is likely that the initial הַ (heh) is an interrogative,79 rather than the definite article, which would neatly make verse 28 into three questions, which in turn would mirror the threefold repetition of אֶ֥רֶץ in verse 29, and, in fact, most translations take it as three questions. This is important to make abundantly clear the distinction between Coniah’s previous position as the signet ring to that of the “... vessel despised... shattered..., this man Coniah.”

The first question then asks why he has become that, and on what account Yahweh threw them away. Does the plural refer to “his seed” in the final question as in a standard case of Hebrew parallelism? That depends on the function of the ו (vav) in וְהֻ֨שְׁלְכ֔וּ (וְהֻשְׁלְכ֔וּ, and they were sent). While it is a somewhat minor grammatical detail, and one cannot be certain, it seems likely that it means “also” in this context, so

79 This appears to be Hamilton's view, by implication from his comments. Hamilton, “460 ה.”
that “he and his seed” in addition to “they” in the previous verse were all thrown away into a land they did not know. Thus, three questions have no answer.

1. Why is he no longer a delight?
2. Why did Yahweh throw away his people?
3. Why did Yahweh throw the king’s family into a land they did not know?

Verse 29 gives the threefold repetition of אֶ֥רֶץ, the final time in pause, for the sake of striking emphasis. It appears at the end that the tragic figure of Coniah the king serves as the greatest possible warning that the inhabitants of the land could hear. Once again, the tragic end of the king is not because of express problems with his character or rebellion. Rather, it serves as a dramatic warning to Judah, perhaps in some of the same ways as Jeremiah’s acted prophecies would have served.

The third oracle is perhaps the most fearsome, but not because of what it threatens. It is fearsome because of the command with which the oracle begins. The image in verse 30 shifts to that of a scribe. Some have suggested a census taker, a land register or a scribe tallying prisoners of war taken to Babylon. In context, the last seems most likely.

Consider the disgrace of Coniah: from being the signet ring on the hand of Yahweh, Yahweh put him on the hand of Nebuchadrezzar. Then he threw him into exile,

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80 i.e., a synthetic parallelism, according to Lowth’s scheme.

81 However, the LXX has only the double repetition: “γῆ γῆ ….” Gesenius, Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, 96. David L Petersen and Kent Harold Richards, Interpreting Hebrew Poetry, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 45. Craige, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:322.

82 While it does threaten barrenness, the previous two oracles seem to threaten worse.

83 Craige, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:322.
whose fate now is at the hands of a nameless Babylonian army official. It is truly striking that the genealogy of the line of David now is in the control of a Babylonian military functionary! The plural imperative makes it likely that this command refers to the long line of bureaucrats to whom Jehoiachin will now serve, even furthering his humiliation. As bad as it is for an ordinary man, he is a powerful person, a king to whom others look for protection, whom his god has not protected and whom a foreign king held up to public humiliation.

Seen in this context, those who continue to hold out hope for Coniah’s return, and thus return from Babylon with him, are only plotting their own demise. They are the immediate object of this distressing and inexplicable oracle against the boy-king. In three different oracles, Coniah becomes one of the final signs of judgment to golah-group. As if to emphasize this, Yahweh cries out loudly to the land three times in verse 29 to “hear the word of the Lord” in what is happening to Coniah.

Some have found at least some note of hope in that this is not the final reference to Jehoiachin, who appears again in 52:32 on ‘…a seat above the seats of the other kings who were with him in Babylon.’ Moreover, both the Chronicler and the Babylonian Chronicle made it clear that in fact in later years he received good treatment and had children whom the Babylonian government provided for. Yet none of his sons advanced to the throne, nor did he ever return to Judah. Perhaps Jeremiah’s word held firm. Further, the use of the plural at strategic times (27-28) to refer to all the people in these three judgment- oracles should give us pause in attempting to assign hope from these circumstances.

“... because a king even in exile may remain a focus of wild hopes, God
uses here the most violent metaphors (24-28) and then the plainest speaking (30) to refute them. Yet the tone is tragic rather than dismissive, as the whole land – perhaps the whole world – is called to ponder what is happening. 84

Nevertheless, grasping at straws of hope in the midst of this profoundly distressing narrative allows us to hide from the picture that the author holds before us. Here is the final king in the line of David, according to the King Collection. Apparently, no more than a youth, he reigned for only a short time without any opportunity to leave an impression on the kingship. He corrected the greatest error, according to Jeremiah, of all the kings of Israel, especially his father Jehoiakim, by surrendering to Babylon as Jeremiah commanded. He did not receive indictment for any crimes by the prophet. Yet he becomes the great object lesson of suffering in exile for his people.

The prophet Haggai will speak of Zerubbabel as “my servant” and “my signet ring” but he was never destined to be a king, nor did the prophet Haggai, who prophesied while he was alive, have any aspirations to make him king. 85 Thus, exile became the place where judgment-oracles combined with the promise of a completely new beginning and, some version of revived messianic hopes. 86

There is no reason in this passage to lighten the darkness of judgment. The question of what has happened to the Davidic covenant will hang like a pall over the


exiles. Only the door of history remains open.\textsuperscript{87} It is, then, perhaps not surprising that the hope of Jeremiah 23:3-8 includes a new exodus and a new “branch” of the Davidic line that God himself will provide, a perspective continued in ch. 52.

The finality of the break is so deep that Luke’s ancestry for Jesus of Nazareth bypasses the royal line completely, and locates his genealogy in David’s son Nathan.\textsuperscript{88} Matthew included Jehoiachin, but excised his father and grandfather along with the other four cursed kings in Israel’s history. Interestingly, in the Christological debates of the first four centuries of the church, this passage in Jeremiah was used by both Irenaeus and Basil to prove that Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew traces his genealogy through Jehoiachin) could not have had a human father, and thus must be divine.\textsuperscript{89} In fact, reconciling the genealogies of Chronicles and the Gospels at this point is an intricate affair.\textsuperscript{90} There is a major break in the royal line. It requires a major reconstruction of the entire line of David.\textsuperscript{91}

Certain facts remain clear: the judgment oracle by Jeremiah is a most strongly worded legal pronouncement, but includes no accusation of what he has done wrong.


\textsuperscript{91} as one example, see Walter C Kaiser et al., \textit{Hard Sayings of the Bible}, CD-ROM (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 310.
This is not to say that he did no wrong. As the son of his father, he may well have followed his father’s example, as 2 Kings 24:9 may imply. Even the fact that he surrendered to the king of Babylon could simply be the inevitable position of a weak young king who sees no other military option. Nevertheless, the oracle is so severe that it strains the sensibilities of even the most conservative exegetes. Nevertheless, attempts to find answers in the possible evil character of Jehoiachin simply do not have any textual grounding. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that one of the reasons for the Shaphanides’ arrangement of the book of Jeremiah is not merely to demonstrate in a broad stroke the accuracy of Jeremiah’s prediction of the triumph of Babylon. As others have noted, that would have been an obvious conclusion from any outside observer not inspired by some sort of sense of a divine promise like the Davidic theology of 701 BCE. In fact, the fate of Jehoiachin is critical to the controversy between who the true prophet of Yahweh is and who the false prophet of Yahweh is.

Is Jeremiah a True Prophet? Jehoiachin's Critical Role

It is rather curious that the conclusion of Jeremiah 52, clearly marked as the addition of a later hand, did not take more pains to show the exact fulfillment of the prophecy against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22. Certainly, the conclusion in chapter 52 leaves room to question whether Jeremiah’s prophecy had come true at all. John Calvin was not the first interpreter, nor the last, to observe that not all of Jeremiah’s prophecies

92 The concept of a king as both beloved and rejected nevertheless would become an important motif for later Jewish exegetes in attempting to understand the exile, and for Christian exegetes attempting to understand the ignominious death by crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. A somewhat parallel hermeneutic, although different from the Jesus-followers, seemed to prevail at Qumran as well. Géza Vermès, ed., “Religious Ideas of the Community,” in The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Rev. ed (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 86.
appeared to have come true as he had given them. In fact, one of the most persistent
themes of Jeremiah’s ministry, the destruction of Babylon, did not actually occur as
Jeremiah predicted in chapter 50, as Calvin observes.\textsuperscript{93} This raises the question of
Deuteronomy, the test of a true prophet. Jeremiah appeared to pass the test of
Deuteronomy 13, whether or not he advocated following other gods. The difficulty is in
chapter 18, where the Israelites receive God’s express command not to follow any
prophet whose words do not come true.\textsuperscript{94} Why did the Shaphanide editors receive
Jeremiah’s words as prophecy when it was not always apparent that his words had come
ture, as he had given them?\textsuperscript{95}

A number of harmonizing answers point out several factors. In general, they posit
that Jeremiah’s words did come true, and although the details were not always consistent,
the big picture remained intact. The approach of classical liberal Protestant theology, as
Childs observes, was to use this passage to justify an existential hermeneutic of prophecy.
Childs has demonstrated that this does not do justice to chapter 28.\textsuperscript{96} The point of chapter
28 is not to create a hermeneutic for the interpretation of prophecy. Rather, it appears that

\textsuperscript{93} Calvin, \textit{Calvin’s Commentaries}, bk. Jer. 50:3.

\textsuperscript{94} For a succinct discussion of the issue, see Fishbane, \textit{Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel},
536. There is a strong Deuteronomic connection to the list of divination practices here in the context of
false prophecy even within the nation of Israel, represented by Hananiah. “… The Deuteronomic
historiographer is often concerned to legitimate Jeremiah’s prophetic actions by means of Deuteronomic
criteria…” Ibid., 245.

\textsuperscript{95} For a survey of the research and the theological problem itself, see Childs, \textit{Biblical Theology of
the Old and New Testaments}, 133–139.

\textsuperscript{96} Brevard S Childs, \textit{Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context}, 1st Fortress Press ed
the editors chose the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah to demonstrate Jeremiah’s legitimacy as a true prophet.

Chapter 28 follows closely on the message of chapter 27. In 27:1, Jeremiah here appears the only time with the shorter version of his name (akin to Jeremy in English). Jeremiah appears before Jehoiakim at the beginning of his reign with another sign-act, a yoke upon his neck signifying the ultimate triumph of Nebuchadnezzar over the nations around them, who at the time were preparing to ally with Egypt. Characteristically, Jeremiah delivers a message of judgment against Judah and counsels submission to Nebuchadnezzar. In 27:12, the scene changes to just before the final deportation, where Jeremiah is addressing Zedekiah, apparently after the deportation of Jehoiachin, with the same message: submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon and you will live. This is in the context of Zedekiah’s meeting with envoys from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, all of whom were conspiring to revolt against Babylon in 594 B.C.E., probably in January 594, described in one of the Babylonian Chronicles. In chapter 28, in response to Jeremiah’s words, which apparently have not yet come true, the prophet Hananiah, takes another yoke and breaks it to signify that God will break the yoke of Babylon in two years and return Jehoiachin to the throne of Judah. Thus, he directly challenges

97 While this is characteristic for Jeremiah, it is uncharacteristic for prophets in the ancient near east, who had a propensity for telling kings what they wanted to hear. If prophets counseled kings to submit to their god, it was through ritual action, not political submission. Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, The IVP Bible Background Commentary, bk. Jer 27:11.

98 Cf. Ibid., bk. Jer 27:3. Interestingly, some of these nations such as Moab, Ammon and Edom are included in the oracles against the nations in 46-51. Moab and Ammon are also recipients of messages of restoration. One other parallel between 27-28 and the OAN are the significant differences between the MT and LXX. Cf. Bright, Jeremiah, 1965, 21:202.
Jeremiah’s message. Jeremiah does not challenge Hananiah’s prophecy until a word from the Lord comes to him commanding him to predict the death of Hananiah, which comes about on the timetable that Jeremiah predicted.99

What has caused difficulty for many interpreters is the initial attitude of Jeremiah toward Hananiah. He does not respond, and appears to slink away with his tail between his legs! However, as Childs has demonstrated, this misses the point of the way the editors construe this confrontation. The point is that Jeremiah is content to let history determine whether he is a true prophet. His Shaphanide editors followed this perspective as they edited and summarized his work, including even their concluding chapter, chapter 52. There, they as well seem content to report what they observe and allow history to determine the future fate of Jehoiachin, and thus Jeremiah. This attitude is strikingly different from the homeland-group, which was determined against all odds that Jehoiachin would return and become a symbol of hope for a restored nation. In fact, here is the critical test of the legitimacy of Jeremiah and his Shaphanide editors. The focal point of disagreement between those who sympathized with Jeremiah (the golah-group) and those who sympathized with Hananiah (the homeland-group) is the fate of Jehoiachin.100 Thus, we find a literary construction of Jehoiachin and his oracle firmly situated in the polemics of exile.

99 Although *ex eventu* prophecy along the lines of the Sibylline oracles – a clear literary fiction – seems in some respects to parallel Jeremiah’s actions here, the construction of the text, most scholars agree, seems to give the clear impression that the prophecy preceded the event. For a general discussion of this phenomenon in the ancient near East, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., “Greek Apocalypse of Ezra,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 1*, vol. 1, CD-ROM (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 318–319. For the argument for the critical consensus that the prophecy preceded the event, see Bright, *Jeremiah*, 1965, 21:203.

100 This is especially striking, given that the Shaphanide scribal practice, where it discernible in the process of textualization, seemed to avoid, when possible, glosses, accretions, deletions or commentary.
A Literary-Polemical Construction of Jehoiachin

We now have a much better understanding, although by no means perfect, of the political interchange and the differing perspectives between the Babylonian exiles and those who remained behind in Judah. The figure of Jehoiachin is a valuable one to the group in Babylon and the group left behind in Judah. Thus, as Carroll observes, like Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, a merely historical personage, and an insignificant one at that, has now acquired some measure of political power. However, Carroll uses his analogy only to deny historicity to the “tales of Jeremiah.” However, this seems to miss the point: while both Richard III and Jehoiachin appear as figures in dramatic reenactments, everyone understands that Richard III was an important king in English history and that the purpose of Shakespeare’s writings is entertainment. That is far from the case with the passage in Jeremiah 22, where Jehoiachin is a most insignificant king whose life takes on religious significance for the entire nation.

Further, textual- and historical-criticism have helped us see that Jeremiah 22:24-30 consists of at least two layers, with a separate Hebrew *Vorlage* behind the LXX texts, which preserve a conversation about the awkward figure of Jehoiachin. Job observes:

“*References to Jehoiachin therefore occur at distinct stages of the book’s*...

Rather, by careful arrangement of oracle and prose, they sought to demonstrate a theological point that may have been at best implicit in the original oracles of Jeremiah.


development, spreading over a long period, during which linguistic habits gradually changed, not simply with regard to ‘Jehoiachin’ but other names too... changing nomenclature and other passages confirms factors anchoring them in later situations.”

A significant part of that conversation emerged when Jehoiachin, against all expectations of the oracle against him, experienced rehabilitation in Babylon. Having set the precedent for surrendering in 597 BCE, Jehoiachin’s rehabilitation now made him a figure around whom to rally. The reality was that those who harbored hopes of Jehoiachin’s return to Israel as king would be disappointed once more. That tension appears even in the textual tensions of Jeremiah 22:24-30. Yet what is critically important is that he became a dramatic figure with great significance in the canonical shaping of Jeremiah, seen in the awkward interplay of the final form of Jeremiah 22:24-

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104 Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 85. “… enthusiasm for the Davidic line oscillated in the course of the book’s development. Because diametrically opposed opinions are left extant in the text, and we are confronted with a record of a debate, the question of the monarchy in particular is left unresolved...” Ibid., 169, cf. also 95. We will argue that this lack of resolution is a deliberate dramatic shape given to the figure of Jehoiachin in the canonical forms of the book of Jeremiah.

105 The alleged Babylonisierung of the exiles is an important consideration. However, for our passage, “The problems surrounding Jer 22:24-30 are great, but with the Χαλδαιοι explicitly mentioned in LXX, Entbabylonisierung is improbable...” Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 151. For further explanation of how the textual history reflects conflicts between Zedekiah and Jehoiachin parties, see Stipp, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah,” 644–647.

106 Although Leuchter does not discuss this specific oracle, his more general discussion on the rehabilitation process is apropos here. Leuchter, The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45, 159.
Though it probably began as a lament, it became one of the most difficult-to-understand judgment oracles in the book. Verses 28-30 clearly connect to 24-27, yet appear to have some distinctions in both textual recension and theme. The LXX, which many commentators take as representing a different, shorter Hebrew Vorlage, begins with a statement, not a question, although this is probably due to the LXX taking the initial יִהְיֶה as a definite article, rather than an interrogative. Two copying mistakes may have led to a different understanding from the MT:

1. "וְזַרְע֔וֹ ("he and his offspring") drops out of the LXX, and yet seems directly related to the issue of his offspring for the throne.

2. נָפַץ does not appear in translation in the LXX, thus weakening the link to

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Without explanation, the canonical form of Jeremiah places Zedekiah at head of the list of the kings beginning in chapter 21. Christopher R. Seitz, “The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101, no. 1 (January 1989): 10; Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 33. “Jehoiakim remains the last king of Judah (in II kings 25...)” Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 1986, 67. Then follows the oracles against Jehoiakim, with whom the record reports Jeremiah having great conflict throughout his life. Shallum follows next; although he reigned for only a short time and in some respects had a career like Jehoiachin. The oracle denounces him, as it does all three kings. Unless, of course, Shallum is just another name for Jehoiachin, “...Jerome, Rashi and Qimhi shared the conviction that ‘Shallum’ referred to Jehoiachin...” or, as Job thinks, Jehoahaz. Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 32, 60, 168. However, Job, as most scholars, thinks this is unlikely (Ibid., 32.). However, Shallum has reasons of covenant abrogation attached to his judgment, whereas Jehoiachin does not. Further, Shallum apparently represents the original Jeremianic kernel, but in its canonical form, the literary and theological heart of the larger passage of 21-24 as it shifted to 23:1-8. The oracle against Jehoiachin hangs awkwardly in the middle. Ibid.; Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 57.

“In Sept. v. 28 does not have the form of a question and it also appears as a statement in Pesh. and Targ. Sept. has a shorter text than MT...” McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, 1:546.
Jeremiah 19:10-11.

McKane cites Duhm and others in seeing the lengthened MT text as a repetition of verse 30, thus individualizing the judgment to Jehoiachin as opposed to his offspring. This would also eliminate, presumably, the people, from any identification with him through Jeremiah 19:10.110

However, another difference between the MT and LXX may lend more significance. We have already noted the threefold repetition of "אֶרֶץ" in MT as opposed to the dual "גֶּה", "גֶּה" in the LXX. On their own, and individually, these differences may not amount to much. Nevertheless, taken together, the copying mistakes in the LXX slightly shape the text (not changing it, since it was already there, but a shift in emphasis) that more closely links Jehoiachin’s judgment to that of the people in 19:10. For those who had hope that Jehoiachin would lead them back to Palestine, his subsequent rehabilitation in Babylon could have led to hopes of return, the very hopes specified in this passage, such that the figure of Jehoiachin rises to the status of national icon.111

Further, verses 24-27 use the image of the signet ring, an appropriate image for a vassal-king such as Jehoiachin (either to YHWH or Nebuchadnezzar), which depicts the severing of the relationship with the suzerain.112 This image could have applied to any of the Davidide kings, but it specifically applied to Jehoiachin, again probably evidence of

110 However, as McKane notes, there is no textual evidence to support this. Ibid., 1:547.

111 For discussion of who the Bible develops characters out of the theological stance of the writers and on the situation of the communities for which they wrote, see Stipp, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah,” 628.

112 For discussion of the concept of Yahweh’s holy war in this passage, see Hill, Friend of Foe?, 40:82.
his character appearing now as a dramatic, tragic symbol for the nation. Seen in this light, Jehoiachin’s rehabilitation under the Babylonians may not have been particularly comforting, as it confirmed that YHWH had torn him off his finger!

Verses 28-30, on the other hand connected Jehoiachin to Jeremiah’s image of the smashed pot from 19:10-11, in yet another connection to the people. Jeremiah himself will participate in this image, and it becomes the image by which he and Jehoiachin link. In a dramatic reversal of Psalm 2, the Davidic king becomes the object smashed by the iron rod! It is a ceremony with many strong roots in ancient near Eastern customs, and would have had a profound effect on those who watched the dramatic portrayal by Jeremiah. Yet verses 26-29 unite in their focus on the land as the object of judgment, thus identifying as one the broken jar of 19:10-11 (the people) and 22:28 (Jehoiachin).

Further, the oracles against Jehoiachin are bracketed prior by what appears to be a psalm (and includes language as found in Psalm 2) at the beginning, and at the end by an oracle against the shepherds, when what one would expect after such a harsh judgment might be the promise of the restored Davidide in 23:5-6. Undoubtedly, this passage

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113 Both Psalms 1-2 may originally have been one psalm, in which case the messianic overtones become the dominant theme. Plant, Good Figs, Bad Figs, 5.

114 Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, 119–120.

115 Cf. “For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the Israelites shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; they shall come in awe to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:4–5, NRSV); “Alas! that day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be rescued from it. On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will break the yoke from off his neck, and I will burst his bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.” (Jeremiah 30:7–9, NRSV). Thus Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” 43–44. Cf. also “Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great wickedness. At dawn the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hosea 10:15–11:1, NRSV). Further, Isa 8:21-9:7, 10:33-11:1, 31:9-32:1, 33:17-18, Ezek 34:17-24, 37:11-25.
reflects shaping influences. The critical question is what is the effect of that shaping process on the canonical form of the text? The Jehoiachin oracle seems to appear at the end of the oracles against the kings in a position of significance, and yet that significance has often eluded interpreters. We return to Carroll’s questions, but now have solid ground upon which to pursue answers:

Nothing can save the king. Given over to the Babylonians he, and his family, his retinue and many important officials of the land go into an exile whence they will not return. The same might have been said of Shallum (vv. 10-12), but why is so much more said about Coniah? Why is it said in such strong terms? Why does the prose statement have attached to it some poetic fragments which appear to make the same point? Among the kings of Judah neither Shallum nor Coniah could be considered significant, yet Coniah features in the cycle more prominently than any other named king. In order to relate vv. 13-19 to Jehoiakim an editorial note in v. 18a is required (who would read the verses as referring to him otherwise?), yet in vv. 24-30 Coniah is named twice. What is so special about him that so much material focuses on him? Why is he singled out for such treatment and why are the terms used of him so strongly expressed?116

Perhaps Carroll does not see a need to answer the questions because in his view the canonical book of Jeremiah is nothing but “…a miscellany of disparate writings - a gallimaufry of writings …it lacks a certain technical sophistication….”117 Yet the textual arrangement itself holds the clues:

... biblical writers had their own way of submitting complex questions to the reader. They did this not with a nuanced argument, but by putting texts side-by-side so the different aspects of the problem were treated separately and in their own way. The intention was that the reader should relate these texts to each other to appreciate the full complexity of the


117 Ibid., 38.
The elevation of an insignificant player to a dramatic icon is representative of one of the literary techniques of the book of Jeremiah: that of the question that expresses a troubling vexation, usually about the weakened condition of the people facing war and defeat. Yet in this case that question in its threefold form מַדּוּעַ ... אִם...אִם (“if... if... so why...?”) is applied to Jehoiachin, again, a subtle indicator that his and the nation’s destiny are intertwined.

The canonical record also has the prophet Jeremiah directing a scribe to record this man עֲרִירִי (ariri), which, because of differences with the LXX has caused a good bit of disagreement among interpreters, some of whom argue that it cannot mean “childless,” but rather “disgraced” or “proscribed.” However, there may be an important link between Jeremiah and Jehoiachin here. Jeremiah consigned himself to celibacy, in a society in which familial succession was critically important. Both Jeremiah and Jehoiachin live a life without progeny who will carry on their office. The legacy of both seems to be in the hands of the Shaphanides.

In addition, the breaking of the vessel is not only a clear picture of the nation, but seems to have a specific connection to Jeremiah, as a dramatic sign-act specifically

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121 Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, 97.
related to the peculiar weightiness of his particular prophetic burden. While the breaking of the vessel in 19:10-11 is clearly a sign to Israel that they would be like the vessel, Jeremiah also invested himself in the action. It was not just the vessel that was significant, but also Jeremiah’s act of breaking it. Thus, in a tragic triangulation of relationships, the destinies and images of king, prophet and nation become one. This appears more clearly in understanding Jeremiah’s place in the political landscape just before exile.

**Jeremiah of Anathoth**

Jeremiah appears in the beginning of the book as “… of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.” Benjamin and Anathoth were important for their geographical location near Jerusalem. Most scholars believe that the priests of Anathoth likely descended from Abiathar, whom Solomon banished to Anathoth for opposing the installation of Solomon. This clan had had its priestly privileges revoked under Solomon centuries previously. With the Zadokites in control of the temple, the descendants of Abiathar remained outside Jerusalem, sites eventually shut down during the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. If this scenario were correct, as many believe, Jeremiah likely

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122 Dubbink approvingly cites von Rad, a viewpoint helpful because it does not require investigation into the psychological interior of the prophet. “Von Rad ... proposes...: ‘The fact that with Jeremiah, and not earlier, the earthen vessel was broken is related to the fact that [he] had taken up the prophetic office in a breadth and depth not seen before.’ He relates the problems with the prophetic office not to the psyche of Jeremiah but to the weight of his burden.” Joep Dubbink, “Getting Closer to Jeremiah: The Word of YHWH and the Literary-Theological Person of the Prophet,” in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence*, ed. Martin Kessler (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 33.

123 Friebel explains helpfully how this worked in the ancient near east “... artifacts were props which helped the prophets convey their messages, but the totality of the message-contents were not in the artifacts themselves. Rather bodily motions (illustrators) accompanied the object so that the messages were conveyed through the coordination of the two. For instance, it was the shattering of the jar (Jer. 19.10), not just the jar, which was significant.” Friebel, *Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts*, 398.
would have grown up with sentiments that ran deeply in favor of the older scribal traditions, which did not fare well under the Jerusalem-centric policies in force since the reign of Solomon.\footnote{124 Michael David Coogan et al., eds., \textit{The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version}, 4th ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1057.}

The first chapter in Jeremiah also includes an important oracle in which Jeremiah receives a word from the Lord declaring “evil from the North,” a theme that appears repeatedly throughout the book.\footnote{125 For a succinct overview see Brevard S Childs, “The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition,” \textit{Journal of Biblical Literature} 78, no. 3 (1959): 187–198.} The foe is undefined, and some may have thought of perhaps Assyria, even though in decline, although it does appear evident that Babylon is intended.

Yet, it is surprising that Jeremiah does not prophesy (at that point) about the evil from the East (Babylon) or the evil from the West (Egypt). In fact, \textit{the threat from Babylon specifically does not appear in any significant way in the canonical ordering of the text, until the oracle against Jehoiachin in 22:24-30}. This is another indicator of the strategic importance of this oracle in the text. The appended chapter 52 begins and ends with Zedekiah and Jehoiachin respectively, just as the oracles against the last Davidides in 21-22. Interestingly, when Babylon’s own doom is prophesied in the OAN, they also are targeted by a nation “from the North” (50:3, 39), although this now refers to the Persians, not the threat posed in chapter 3. Rather, the oracle in chapter 3 makes clear that the evil will come from within the nation of Israel itself, from Mount Ephraim (4:15). Judah, the southern kingdom, will be invaded by the evil from the North, not by military
might (although that was always a possibility, given the previous history), but rather through their syncretistic religious practices, anathema to the reforms of Josiah, which required only worship at Jerusalem. Amazingly, Jeremiah prophesies mercy for the northern tribes, if they repent, apparently as a way to stir up Judah by way of jealousy (3:11). In fact, it is this prophecy where the first indications appear. Based on the canonical order, as well as the historical-critical order generally conceived by scholars, God would save his rebellious northern tribes *apart* from the ark of the covenant, presaging the new covenant language in the Book of Consolation (30-33).126

Immediately, one can see the tension between the homeland group who had responded to the reforms of Josiah, who once prided themselves on their opposition to the syncretistic worship of the northern tribes, and the prophetic irony that the northern tribes would yet receive some new kind of salvation apart from the ark of the covenant! This provides the run-up to the Deuteronomic sermon in Jer. 4:3-4 where Jeremiah commands the people of Judah to “circumcise their hearts,” using the exact language found in Deuteronomy 10:16.

This is troublesome for many scholars who see a rigid division between redactional layers of Jeremiah, since the importation of the language from Deuteronomy occurs in a poetic section of an oracle, generally considered source A, and the closest to the *ipsissima verba* of the prophet. Only Leuchter, who sees a close connection between Jeremiah and Shaphanide Deuteronomistic editing, and Brevard Childs, with his theory

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126 This is especially striking since the ark functioned as a type of the holy city itself in rabbinic aggada. Cf. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 422.
of the B biographical prose material serving as the “glue” that hold A and C tightly together, have proposed theories to account for this.\textsuperscript{127}

\textbf{Jeremiah as the Foe from the North?}

Yet, undoubtedly, this kind of speech did not endear Jeremiah to his own people.\textsuperscript{128} Indeed, the priests of Anathoth, from his own priestly circle, were the ones who were seeking Jeremiah’s life (11:21). It becomes clear that Jeremiah is a pariah among them, especially those who have any leadership role of the nation. The shepherds of Israel (prophets, priests and kings) were unreliable and downright dangerous, so God would have to give his people new ones (3:15-18, 23:1-6). Interestingly, in both cases, two significant markers of Israelite identity would need to be replaced, the ark and the exodus. This foreshadows the promise of a new covenant not like the one with Moses, in 31:31-40.

Ironically, the north country will become the place of salvation and the beginnings of a new exodus (23:7-8). Characteristic of Jeremiah’s poetic irony in his prophecies, Ephraim later becomes the place of blessing and comfort in the book of consolation (31:9, 18-20). Probably the Shaphanide editors intend the reader to see that because the northern tribes have submitted to exile and foreign rule, even though they are syncretistic, God will save them because they humbled themselves under the hand of the foreign king that God brought against them. This becomes a point of differentiation


\textsuperscript{128} This could partly result from the fact that Jeremiah’s ministry covered the last five kings of Judah (cf. the discussion in Avioz, \textit{“I Sat Alone”: Jeremiah Among the Prophets}, 10ff.) all of whom Jeremiah prophesied against.
between the “good figs and bad figs” of chapter 24. The good figs are those who submit to exile (including Jehoiachin) and the bad figs are those who remained behind in the land that is now under God’s curse.

The point of this is to say that the position of the northern tribes in the north country was religiously unconformed to the reforms of Josiah, and, yet, ironically, became a model for how the southern kingdom was to submit to Babylon. This cannot have been at all pleasant news for those who had been faithful in Jerusalem to the reforms of Josiah. Surely their obedience and repentance should have procured for them absolution from the judgment, for so long as the king was obedient, God would never violate his covenant with his people, or so the theory went. *Yet as the oracle against Jehoiachin first indicated, Yahweh apparently no longer considered himself bound by the Deuteronomic code.*

This tells us that Jeremiah’s status as a northerner in the southern kingdom of Judah gives him a somewhat subversive cast in his presence in the priesthood, a position recognized by the fact that by chapter 36, when it is time for him to confront Jehoiakim, he has been barred from the temple. His own relatives, the priesthood of Anathoth, become some of his worst enemies after he prophesies against the kings (chapter 19), and they even hatch a plot to kill him, leading to the last two of his six personal laments, 21:18-20). Given their history, it is somewhat surprising that they did not come to the defense of their fellow priest when he was in conflict with the Jerusalem priesthood and the Solomonic successor. Indeed, a state of conflict prevailed, and someone would need to take the blame.
Exile as Punishment and Promise

Mark Roncace observes, “If Zedekiah is not the scapegoat, the bad guy, then who is to blame…”129 Exile would have forced a cataclysmic change on the nation, and its offices: priests were no longer necessary since there was no temple; kings were in prison, and prophets had to work within a completely altered set of cultural and religious circumstances. Not only did Jeremiah borrow, or better, incorporate, elements of ancient near Eastern practice into his repertoire of prophetic communication, but he also adopted the style of communication suited to the world stage into which Israel unwillingly went. It is likely that Jeremiah found the pattern of working with scribes to be both convenient and a well-recognized pattern.130

129 Roncace, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem, 158.

130 For discussion of the relationship between prophet and scribal circle, see Dearman, “My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36,” 411, 419; T. R. Hobbs, “Some Proverbial Reflections in the Book of Jeremiah,” Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 91, no. 1 (1979): 62. It was a pattern used by Confucius, Socrates (both of whom followed Jeremiah closely chronologically) and ultimately Jesus as well. William Sumner Appleton Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, Hyperion reprint ed (Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, 1981), 14–15; Annping Chin, The Authentic Confucius: A Life of Thought and Politics (New York: Scribner, 2007), back matter. In fact, this time of Israel’s discontent was also the time of the great realignment of power and the flowering of movements that would have an effect on the world for years to come. “The postexilic period of Biblical history (586–400 B.C.) was one of the most important periods in world history. This was an era of religious ferment. Zoroaster (Zarathustra), the founder of a religion that still has adherents in the East, lived during this period. Laocius (Lao-tse, “the Old One”), the founder of Taoism, and Confucius (K’ung-fu-tse, “Master K’ung”) flourished in China in this same period. Gautama Buddha was born in India about 550 B.C.. The Upanishads, the sacred writings of Hinduism, were written about 500 B.C.. This period was also an era of cultural flowering. This was the period of the great lyric poets Sappho, Archilochus, Anacreon, and Pythérus. The enlightened code of the lawgiver Solon emanates from this period. The golden age of Pericles in Greece was one of the greatest cultural advancements in all history. Great thinkers such as Socrates (469–399 B.C.) and Plato (427–347 B.C.) were on the scene at this time. The postexilic period was also a time of political upheaval. Judah fell to Babylon in 586 B.C.. Babylon was overthrown by the Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C.. Egypt was conquered by the Persians in 525 B.C.. Greece struggled heroically to repel the Persian invasion. Toward the end of this period Persia was tottering.” James E. Smith, The Minor Prophets, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1994), chap. 37.
Not only would the exile force Israel to reduce of its religious traditions to writing, thus raising their scriptures to prominence above all.\textsuperscript{131} In fact, exile became the new paradigm that shaped the entire experience of those who experienced deportation. Their experience of the exile became the new hermeneutic for them to interpret the future.\textsuperscript{132} Thus, seeing significance in an insignificant king like Jehoiachin was a way by which the inexplicable and senseless (to their understanding) destruction of the nation could find significance once again. It became a way of thinking that powerfully shaped later Judaism as well as Christianity.\textsuperscript{133} Even Jeremiah’s traditional Israelite wisdom was reshaped by scribes in the exile, subsuming, even while using, the wisdom traditions in the service of prophetic proclamation.\textsuperscript{134}

While there is debate as to how much pro-Babylonian policies shaped our particular passage, there can be no doubt, with Nebuchadnezzar described in the words of YHWH as \textit{עַבְדִּי} (\textit{avdi}, “My servant”) and Cyrus, in Isa 45:1, described as \textit{מָשִׁיחַ} (\textit{mo\text{"}sia\text{"}ḥ}, “Anointed”), that the world stage has shifted dramatically.\textsuperscript{135} The book of Jeremiah takes


\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 160–161.

\textsuperscript{134} Hobbs, “Some Proverbial Reflections in the Book of Jeremiah,” 71, 72; Hill, \textit{Friend of Foe?}, 40:143–144; Plant, \textit{Good Figs. Bad Figs}, 4. See especially Leuchter: “The folly of the Wise became incorporated into a larger redactional discourse concerning the need to look into the nation’s past in order to understand its present state. This redaction -- resulting in the \textit{Urrolle} -- involved Jeremiah’s reworking of his early Josianic materials to operate in tandem with the Judean Polemic as a continuous literary corpus.” Leuchter, “Jeremiah,” 190.

\textsuperscript{135} Job goes on to note the ideological tendency of the LXX to remove references to Nebuchadnezzar as Yahweh’s servant. Job, \textit{Jeremiah’s Kings}, 151, 159–160. Hill argues; “‘The suggestion that the figures of Babylon and Jerusalem are so similar that they can hardly be distinguished runs counter to the conventional understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which is well expressed in Revelation
full account of those changes in numerous ways, particularly in the new relationship of Israel to Nebuchadnezzar.\textsuperscript{136} The dramatic, literary hinge pin for this change is the otherwise-insignificant figure of Jehoiachin, whose character continues to resonate throughout the book. His future is the nation’s future.

**Surviving Jeremiah**

Can anyone survive Jeremiah’s oracles?\textsuperscript{137} Should anyone try to?\textsuperscript{138} Moreover, if they succeed, what does this say about Jeremiah’s status as a false or true prophet?\textsuperscript{139} Yet, somehow, Jehoiachin slips the noose and appears shortly later in the book of Jeremiah, described, amazingly, in chapter 24 as one of the “good figs” who will experience YHWH’s spiritual and material blessings. The name Jehoiachin or Jeconiah, not Zedekiah, is associated in the canonical remembrance of the exile as the decisive

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\textsuperscript{136} “The prolific references to Nebuchadnezzar in Jeremiah far exceed those to other kings considered.” Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 167.


\textsuperscript{138} For a helpful discussion of one of the most pressing theological questions of the exile – how Yahweh practices justice in Israel, and whether or not Israel had any special status any more, see Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 3, 29–30.

turning point (Esther 2:6, Jeremiah 27:20, 28:4, 29:2).\textsuperscript{140} He rises to a place of honor, truly becoming a signet ring on the hand of the king of Babylon in chapter 52.\textsuperscript{141} In the canonical shape of the book, he forms the end-piece to the entire work of Jeremiah, as he prospers in exile. There can be no doubt that this was a deliberate placement. 2 Chronicles 3 records several generations of offspring for him. In addition, the four ration tablets of the Babylonians continue to refer to him as “King Jehoiachin.”\textsuperscript{142} It is clear that the figure of Jehoiachin assumes importance in the book of Jeremiah that his otherwise relatively insignificant life probably did not merit on its own terms, in comparison to other kings.

In response to this new direction for Jehoiachin, Martin Goulder has advanced a thesis that Jehoiachin fits the suffering servant motif of Isaiah 53. Indeed, in an exilic context, one can understand how this understanding might have developed. Goulder makes an interesting case, based on eight potential parallels between the experience of Jehoiachin (both before and after exile) and Isaiah 53 that indeed, Jehoiachin is the suffering servant spoken of by Isaiah.

\begin{itemize}
  \item [(1)] He was born in 615, and grew up as crown prince at Jerusalem: “he grew up before him [Yahweh] as a tender plant”. (2) It was his father Jehoiakim, not he, who broke the vassal-treaty with Babylon: “he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth”. (3) With the surrender of 597, he was arrested, sentence was given against him, and he was deported: “from oppression and judgement he was taken away”. (4) He was flogged: “he was wounded for our transgressions . . . by his
\end{itemize}

\ulp
\textsuperscript{140} The shortened form, Coniah, only appears in connection with his removal from office (22:24, 28, 37:1).

\textsuperscript{141} Friebel notes that this sign-act continued even into the New Testament in Paul’s binding in Ephesus. Friebel, \textit{Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts}, 56–57.

\textsuperscript{142} Job, \textit{Jeremiah’s Kings}, 80.
stripes we are healed”. (5) He was an object of contempt to Jeremiah and others: “he was despised and we esteemed him not”. (6) He spent 37 years in a Babylonian prison, understood by DI as a dungeon: “he was cut off out of the land of the living . . . he appointed his grave with the wicked . . . with a rich man in his deaths”. (7) He was released in 561, given daily meals in the royal banqueting hall, and promoted over other kings: “my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high . . . kings shall shut their mouths because of him”. (8) This was amazing news, and was regarded by the D-historian as a sign of Yahweh’s guidance of history: “Who hath believed that which we have heard? And to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed?” There are of course many details in DI which do not come in historical source; but it is easy to sympathize with his horror at the king’s protracted sufferings, as he imagined them; and the theological connections which he makes with the national sins of the seventh century, and the hope of a world-wide spiritual empire for the Davidic monarchy."

Goulder’s proposal is indeed intriguing, but is not persuasive. Some of the parallels may have happened, but not necessarily, such as the flogging, the length of Jehoiachin’s prison time, and the attitude of Jeremiah to Jehoiachin, which is conflicted. Job finds his arguments intriguing, but shifts them in such a way as to see a progression from first Jehoiachin, then to Zerubbabel, then Cyrus the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, and finally the nation of Israel itself. Job draws a number of parallels between Jeremiah and Jesus, an analogy that could gain credibility by the way in which Jeremiah’s sign-act of shattering the jar identifies him with Jehoiachin, such that Jeremiah also fits the suffering servant motif. Further, the identity of the suffering servant became a more intense debate the longer the post-exilic community moved into the New Testament period and division over the identity of Jesus of Nazareth increased,


144 For an excellent discussion of the various historical scenarios attributed to this passage, both inside and outside the Jewish community, see Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 150; Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” 50 n122. Ibid., 50, n122.

145 Job, Jeremiah’s Kings, 195.
as the Pharisaic communities reacted negatively to the way the Jesus-followers handled the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{146} Within Judaism, Jehoiachin became a symbol of hope for the nation. Although many kings had failed them, Jehoiachin, perhaps, by means of the exile, could atone for his (and the nations’) sins and receive the promises of God again even in the land of Babylon.\textsuperscript{147} However, finding that hope meant facing some of the most difficult and unanswerable questions of Jewish history.

In the final canonical form of the book of Jeremiah, in both the MT and LXX (and its Hebrew Vorlage), one of the most insignificant kings in the Davidic line is established as a dramatic figure in chapter 22 as a figure who in important and critical ways identifies with Jeremiah and the nation.\textsuperscript{148} Yet, the text singles him out for judgment in the most crushing terms, although his forebear, Jehoiakim, and his uncle Zedekiah, receive far more press in the book of Jeremiah and are far more blameworthy. This created one of the most pressing questions forced upon the Jews by exile: was God really just?

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 175. Further, Goulder’s proposal has invited similar comparisons by commentators such as Job, comparing the career of Jesus to Jeremiah. “Although Jeremiah is seldom named in the New Testament -- all instances are in Matthew, and Mt 27:9 refers in fact to a passage in a different prophet (Zech 11:12f) -- it is likely that the New Testament writers were conscious of Jeremiah’s career as structurally similar to Jesus’s. Points that stand out are fearless proclamation, warning compatriots of the likely outcome of their policies, conflict with the authorities, undeserved sufferings, cry of dereliction but also the note of hope beyond the apparent end. The gospel accounts of Jesus’s career and teaching suggests that such features serve to confirm the possibility of a Messiah characterized by prophetic suffering, and in no case is a prophet’s career documented in anything like the detail found in Jeremiah. On the other hand, the many bad kings and the one good one (Josiah) forming the main subject-matter for the present work serve to create, both negatively and positively, a kind of ‘identikit picture’ within the book of Jeremiah by which any candidate for Messiahship could be measured -- particularly with regard to conformity with the law which crystallizes the key question to be asked about a king.” Ibid., 195.


\textsuperscript{148} Sweeney explains: “Redaction critical work must begin with a clear understanding of the final form of text as the basis for literary-historical reconstruction.” Sweeney, “Jeremiah 30–31 and King Josiah’s Program of National Restoration and Religious Reform,” 572.
... the question of how YHWH practices justice in Israel—whether he differentiates between people, and if so, why—is one of the fundamental theological concerns of the Old Testament.” 149

The oracle against Jehoiachin forces this question to the surface on the very day of exile and yet this question receives no answer, surprising for such an important figure in the final canonical shape of the book. Carroll objects, that the “…peculiarities of [chapter] 28 should warn the exegete against treating it as anything other than a disjunctive story in the tradition…” 150 Yet, the story of Jehoiachin in ch. 22 raises a host of unanswered questions. Surely, one can also posit a conflicted character as a literary type who demands resolution later in the narrative, as Friebel notes the parallels with Greek literature:

“One might compare the actions of Diogenes, the Greek Cynic, who performed bizarre actions for communicative and rhetorical purposes. Some of his actions were considered by his own contemporaries as going beyond the bounds of decency, but this did not prevent him from performing them.” 151

The figure of Jehoiachin is critical to the message of Jeremiah. In the MT (and possibly the LXX as well), probably reflecting the latest stage of the canonical book’s development, he is the closing figure of the book, having escaped the crushing judgment oracle of Jeremiah but living in exile, submitted to the word of the Lord through Jeremiah 149 Plant, Good Figs, Bad Figs, 3. It is true that Zedekiah also has no reasons attached to his judgment, but “…the culpability of the last Judaean king and his generation is taken so much for granted that the author does not even trouble himself to give reasons for the coming ordeal which ν 7 announces…” Stipp, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah,” 633. Besides, specific instances of Zedekiah’s disobedience appear repeatedly in Jeremiah, unlike Jehoiachin.

150 Carroll, Jeremiah, 1986, 543.

151 Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, 22–23.
in submission to king Nebuchadnezzar. He apparently receives Nebuchadnezzar as the “servant of the Lord,” a title which he could easily have claimed for himself as the last king from the line of David. Job explains:

“With regard to 22:25, our starting-point is the link created by the figure of the signet-ring, applied to Zerubbabel in Hg 2:23 and to Jehoiachin in Jer 22:24. If, as we have argued, the latter is a counterblast to the enthusiasm for Zerubbabel found also in Zech 4, assailing his royal claims as Jehoiachin’s grandson, it becomes important that the layer in Jeremiah for which a period of seventy years is crucial is likely to be related to the seventy years mentioned in Zech 1:12. But, as Schmid points out, whereas in Zechariah 1:12 this reflects a straightforward calculation of the time between 587 and the rebuilding of the temple (clearly crucial for both Haggai and Zechariah), redactors of Jeremiah had to adopt drastic measures to identify the period’s beginning with Josiah’s death, especially if it explains the mysterious (and often emended) reference to Jehoiakim’s fourth year in 27:1. Clearly, if Jer 22:24f is intended to dispose of Jehoiachin as a figure of ancestral relevance for royalty, not only would it fit with the no doubt shocking attribution of the word ‘servant’ to Nebuchadnezzar, but it would also fit Schmid’s theory that Isa 40-55 was once attached to the tradition at this stage of redaction. If so, the replacement for Nebuchadnezzar envisaged was not at this point a restored scion of the Davidic line, but Cyrus, Yahweh’s ‘Shepherd’ (Isa 44:28), ‘his anointed’ (Isa 45:1). This complex of literary relationships probably makes Jer 22:24f comparable with the arrival of Cyrus in the Isaiah tradition, clearing the decks for this particular thrust.”

These tensions testify that the canonical record of Jehoiachin uses him as the dramatic literary marker in the history of the nation as they transition from being a nation in Palestine ruled by a scion of David, to being a diaspora people who look forward in the distant future to a calling from the nations.

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153 Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 156.

154 Smelik, “An Approach to the Book of Jeremiah,” 2. This stance recalls their traditions of the exodus Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 27.
Jehoiachin’s legacy is an awkward, conflicted figure, not so much in the modern psychological sense (although that may also have been true, but we simply do not have the textual evidence to support it), but in the image he receives in the canonical version of Jeremiah. Thus, it is appropriate for Carroll to be confused about this. On the other hand, it is just as—perhaps more so—appropriate to see Jehoiachin changing status back and forth in the polemics of exile, along with the record of this debate left intact within the book, as a deliberate construct in the final form of Jeremiah.

These conflicting and confusing images join in the figure of Jehoiachin. He becomes a figure who could at once embody the conflicted grief and the undying hopes of a nation. By exile, they submitted to the word of the prophet, as difficult and heart wrenching as it was. There was indeed a path to restoration. God would accomplish it in a foreign land with a king they did not know. 155

As Carroll notes, these types of awkward, conflicted dramatic figures appear often in Shakespearean and Greek tragedies, and yet readers understand that they are there to create a literary tension that requires resolution, which they must seek from the author as they continue to observe the drama. The postexilic Jewish communities in Babylon and Egypt began the arduous and difficult task of reconstructing their written history from whatever they had been able to salvage before exile. It surely makes sense that their faith perspective would cause them to look at their own history through a lens expecting God to continue writing the story of their people in the future to bring resolution from this

155 Cf. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 207; Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” 22. As Sharp notes in her critique of McKane on ch. 44: “There are, in fact, clear redactional Tendenzen discernible here, and the tensions in the material are coherent ones that can be seen to result from the conflicting viewpoints of those redactional perspectives.” Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah*, 70.
height of dramatic tension.\footnote{For the use of prophetic utterance to point toward a physical and spiritual rebirth of Israel, see Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” 17.} Their story was a divine story with significance for the nations (rooted in the Abraham traditions of Genesis 12:3). They could see their own significance in their most insignificant king. They could leave the unbearable tension in his story because of their conviction that God was still speaking, writing and acting, and that there was a resolution that they, as readers of their own history, were dependent on a very skillful author to reveal its most unexpected resolution at some future – perhaps far distant – portion of their narrative.
CHAPTER 3: THE ORACLE AND MT JER 45-52

One of the most striking things about the book of Jeremiah is the major literary difference between the two textual traditions of the LXX and the MT, and the hermeneutical implications for reading of Jeremiah as a self-contained work.1 The book of Jeremiah is the longest of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible. Although Isaiah has more chapters, Jeremiah has more words than any other prophetic book.

Further, there are two quite distinct textual traditions. The LXX version is almost 15% shorter than the MT and often economizes language where the MT tends to expand it. The other major difference between the two textual traditions is that the LXX places the Oracles against the Nations (OAN, largely 45-51 in the MT) earlier in the book, following 25:13a, where the first mention is made of oracles against the nations in both traditions. The inclusio usage of מָקוֹם (makom, “place”) in this section delineates it in the MT, as Mark Leuchter has demonstrated.2 Curiously, the MT, after announcing the oracles, then proceeds to further (mainly prose) oracles and prose discourse, unlike the previous poetic oracles that appeared in 1-25. This surely reflects a deliberate shift to

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1 “…the learning tradition of Sacred Scripture in Babylon was remarkable. In the reorganization of Judaism after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the Babylonian text of the Hebrew Bible was accepted by the rabbis of Javneh (now the basis of critical editions of the Masoretic text) and replace the Palestinian text, which had been in use until then: the latter is preserved only as witnessed in the Greek translation of the Septuagint, the Pentateuch of the Samaritans, and the biblical manuscripts from Qumran. Later the Babylonian, became the authoritative codification of the rabbinic traditions…” Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament: History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, vol. 1, 2nd ed (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 211–212. “…the history of the recensions of the Greek Bible shows that the Greek and Hebrew texts remained in contact for many centuries. Revisions of the Greek text are closely tied to the development of the Hebrew text. Later recensions show increasing influence from the Babylonian Hebrew version.” Ibid., 1:239.

remove the OAN from their natural place and put them in another place in the canonical
version. The question is, “Why?”

**Hermeneutical Paths for LXX and MT**

Jack Lundbom has provided a possible explanation for this development. The
LXX represents the Hebrew *Vorlage* of an earlier stage of textual tradition overseen
probably by Baruch. According to Lundbom, the MT represents a later stage in
development, perhaps overseen by Seraiah, probably the brother of Baruch, and son of
Shaphan, the family that had been supportive of Jeremiah during his ministry in Judah.³
Both the Egyptian and the Babylonian Shaphanide scribes strongly opposed the false
hopes of the homeland-group.⁴ Thus, both textual traditions, whatever their differences,
and they are many, nevertheless unite in presenting a mythical (literary framework of a
historical person) significance for Jehoiachin, rather than an immediate historical one.

There is significance here for our study of the oracle against Jehoiachin lies in that
he seemed to represent different things to the group in Babylon versus the group
remaining in Judah before the final exile under Zedekiah. That there was a difference of
perspective between these two groups, and perhaps even political and polemical tension,
is undeniable. The group in Babylon represented those upon whom Jeremiah had
conferred his prophetic blessing. The group who remained behind ultimately rejected his
advice to submit to Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar’s general, and removed him by force
to Egypt, even against his oracles and personal wishes (42:7-43:7 MT).

³ Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of.”

⁴ Although a secondary group after the Shaphanides was responsible for the development of the
LXX.
Jehoiachin represented some cherished hope among the homeland group of a return to the land of Israel, temple and king, as they had known it. This could explain the adaptation of the final chapters of II Kings as chapter 52 in the LXX and MT of Jeremiah. For them, perhaps Jehoiachin still represented the best hope of the restoration of the Davidic line, despite the crushing world empire of Babylon. However, as we will see below, there are significant differences between Jer. 52 and its parallel at the end of 2 Kings that show a different theological and polemical perspective.

In a slightly different take, Schniedewind argues that, in fact, the royal family in exile in Babylon presided over the Babylonian text tradition, from which the MT arguably arose, in its editing and recensions. This would explain, of course, the addition of the restoration of Jehoiachin at the end of the book. However, this it does not explain the same phenomenon in the LXX, a product of Alexandria in Egypt. However, if Schniedewind’s theory is correct, then it is also possible that the LXX was a descendent of the group that took Jeremiah and Baruch along with them. This is Lundbom’s hypothesis and remains the most likely scenario.

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5 If they did, it was against the clear redefinition of Jeremiah, as he describes a new reality without an ark, temple and a “new” covenant. For a superb discussion of Jeremiah’s technique in creating this new reality, see Leuchter, “The Temple Sermon and the Term מממצה in the Jeremianic Corpus.”

This, however, does not necessarily mean, as some scholars like McKane argue for other reasons, that the LXX is thus the “original” or “authentic” textual tradition, given its connection to Jeremiah.\(^7\) This would not appear to be the case. When the Egypt group fled, they took Jeremiah along by force, not willingly, and against his oracle telling them specifically not to flee to Egypt. It is doubtful that the relations between Jeremiah and the group in Egypt were particularly good, and one could speculate that, indeed, given the apparent connections between Jeremiah and the Babylon group, that the MT better represents whatever editorial guidance Jeremiah had been able to give in the editing of his works in its later stages. This receives support from the (apparently Deuteronomistic) editorial comments of 51:60-61. Standard text-critical theory could assign priority to the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX based on a shorter form and economy of language. This is McKane’s argument concisely and is a solid argument based on the critical principles of text-criticism, particularly as developed in New Testament studies.\(^8\)

In fact, the text-critical process of critical scholars on this vexing question seldom raises the question of why the ancients did not seem to be overly bothered with this

\(^7\) McKane argues this point in the more traditional grounds of text-criticism, although his theory has not found wide acceptance. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, 1:xvi.

\(^8\) Nevertheless, as even McKane admits, a broad stroke does not wipe away all difficulties and each case of textual divergence deserves treatment on its own. Carroll deals with this by essentially ignoring any sense of history within the text. He believes there may not even have been a Jeremiah, and that the entire body of the canonical book of Jeremiah, though obviously a composite picture, nevertheless is a piece of imaginative writing which uses some historical events and scenes as a springboard for dramatic genius, much as in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* or *Macbeth*. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 1986, 45. While I am unconvinced about Carroll’s opinion on the historicity of Jeremiah, I think the literary analogy is apropos. What makes *Richard III* a great piece of literature is precisely its interpretation of an actual historical figure. Nevertheless, William McKane has put the most time into this question of textual comparison, and his work deserves serious consideration. The meticulous detail and wealth of comparative material in his introduction to his commentary is worth the price of the book itself. No other work compares in the breadth and scope of detail.
apparently obvious conundrum.\(^9\) Both textual traditions remained alongside each other in communities such as Qumran without any attempt to harmonize or prioritize one over the other. This appears profoundly illuminating, because by that time, for the most part, the canonical decisions had already obtained and both traditions stood alongside one another. This probably reflects a conservative impulse in the inheritors of the textual traditions of the exile (not necessarily theologically conservative, although they may have been that, but a tendency to conserve and preserve whatever the editors and compilers understood as representing Jeremiah).

The Qumran find would also seem to settle a vexing text-critical question that continues to torment critical scholars: which came first? Which was the “original”? The fact that both the Hebrew *Vorlage* to the LXX and the MT appear in the Qumran libraries mean that from a very early point (at least from our perspective), the tradition stabilized itself with two textual traditions side-by-side.\(^10\) While the canonical decision ultimately gave the nod to the MT, there was no effort made to dispense with the shorter version of the LXX. The implication is profound: the judgment of the early interpreters was that one account (which by that time may have attained some canonical status), the longer MT version, perhaps because there were more textual connections with Jeremiah than the Alexandrian textual tradition, was viable, even preferable. Yet the voice of the shorter

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version did not disappear. Often, ideological critics see in texts such as these a means by which one group or another seizes or maintains power. This undoubtedly deserves consideration. However, it cannot serve as a totalizing explanation, for the simple reason that traditors deliberately kept both traditions. Sometimes, the textual traditors found a way to make their canonical judgments without silencing another strong candidate, while at the same time clearly differentiating between the authoritative work on Jeremiah, and the many imaginative re-portrayals of him in the post-canonical and apocryphal literature. Yet they were happy to have two representatives as canonical witnesses.

So far, it seems little has been done in critical scholarship to make use of this opportunity, and is probably derives from leftover 19th century Protestant ideas of inspiration, perhaps seen most clearly in Mowinckel. That is the character of romantic genius, whose disciples gloss, accrete and generally obscure the original man. However, this explanation seems unnecessary, and only serves to reinforce the goals of a revisionist 19th-century Protestant confessionalism, not scholarly inquiry. In fact, it has mainly passed by the board in contemporary study, particularly with Blenkinsopp’s foundational study on prophetism in Israel in the ancient near East.11

Where this comes to play for our purposes is in the placement of the OAN in the MT. Reasons have been slow to come for this arrangement, and scholars remain divided. There is, however, a theological principle from the oracle against Jehoiachin that we find in the oracle to Baruch (45) and the first half of the OAN, and this remains constant throughout the OAN and the appendix of Ch. 52.

11 “...The portrait of the prophet as "religious genius" generally went with the lowest theme for religious institutions and ritual in particular. Deriving in good part from Herder and the Romantics, this one-sided view has since been rendered obsolete...” Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel, 28.
The Oracles against Jehoiachin and Baruch

The chapter just prior to the OAN in the MT is the account of Jeremiah’s oracle to Baruch.\(^\text{12}\) In that oracle, we find a running condemnation of Baruch’s possible motives in his service of Jeremiah. Inexplicably, a promise that he will retain his life as a prize of war follows without explanation or reference to the Deuteronomistic code. This follows the same principle as the Jehoiachin oracle, except in reverse. Here, reasons for judgment are given, but apart from any Deuteronomistic covenant-stipulations, he receives a blessing instead of judgment. This provides the ideological bridge between the preceding prose narratives in the first half of the OAN. This principle of God dispensing his justice and his kindness apart from the covenantal framework of the law which the nation of Israel had known for so long is new, and finds its first expression in the oracle against Jehoiachin. Yet, how is one to explain the placement of the oracle here? Here again, Carroll sees part of the answer:

> Although not in chronological order, the placement of the piece after 44 may be a deliberate attempt to balance the awful finality of the annihilation of the Jews of Egypt. Baruch, now in Egypt, is to be a survivor in the coming disaster which will befall ‘all flesh’ (45:5). Like

\(^{12}\) Wolfhart Pannenberg sets the larger canonical eschatological foreground for the oracle: “With the overthrow of the Davideic monarchy in Jerusalem Jeremiah saw the function of the earthly representation of Yahweh’s rule pass to the conqueror, the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. 44:30). Deutero-Isaiah then proclaimed the Persian king Cyrus to be the coming new representative of Yahweh’s world dominion on earth, while in Deuteronomy the establishment of human monarchy by the people of Israel became an offense against the sole lordship of God over his people. The way was thus prepared for the critical turn against the rule of world empires that we find in Dan. 2:31–45. In the long run neither the Babylonian nor the Persian Empire, much less the divided empire of the successors of Alexander, could fulfill the function of earthly representation of the divine government by establishing justice and peace. Faith in God’s righteousness had thus to nurture expectation of a future kingdom in which God himself would come to rule (Dan. 2:44–45) and which would bear human features in contrast to the wild beast character of the kingdoms that arose out of the ocean of chaos (7:13–14).” Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 3, CD-ROM (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1998), 50–51.
Jeremiah and Ebed-melech, Baruch symbolizes survival in the future. Interestingly, we find the same phenomenon with the oracle against Baruch in Jeremiah 45 (MT) that we found in Jehoiachin’s oracle. Precritical and critical conservative and critical interpreters tend toward a moralizing approach that supply reasons for why Baruch receives his rebuke. These reasons do not appear in the text. For all we know, the oracle may simply have been to remind Baruch that his status as the scribe of Jeremiah did not grant him an exemption clause from the suffering about to come on Judah and Jerusalem. Yet, just as with the oracle against Jehoiachin, interpreters cannot resist supplying details of alleged moral defect on Baruch’s part to explain the oracle.

- James Smith believes that Baruch had grandiose personal ambitions.14
- John Calvin believed that Baruch wanted to run away from his calling.15
- Matthew Henry believes that he had good intentions but could not stand up under suffering.16
- Robertson believes that he expected some public recognition for his faithful service to the prophet.17
- John Bright believes that he was in despair because his mission had ended

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16 Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible (Unabridged), bk. Jer. 45:1–5.

in failure.\textsuperscript{18}

- Barton and Muddiman believe that he considered himself Jeremiah’s replacement and thus received his rebuke.\textsuperscript{19}

- Many commentators, following Bright, focus on the character of Baruch as the reason for the chapter.\textsuperscript{20}

- Perhaps not surprisingly, Duhm deletes the entire opening formula.\textsuperscript{21}

However, this moralizing is a rabbit trail. Taylor (quoted approvingly in John Hill, cited above) has pointed out that the temporal marker in 45:1 “… in the fourth year of Jehoiakim…” functions the same way it does in the other places it appears in the book (25:1; 36:1; 46:2).\textsuperscript{22} At strategic places throughout the book, the defining and climactic events of chapter 36 communicate that the prophetic message has received a definitive rejection and there is no further offer of repentance. Along with the rejection of the prophet’s message is a transition from oral proclamation to the written word, from prophetic ministry to scribal culture. Chapter 45 thus marks the end of a phase in which Jeremiah alone carries the written word.\textsuperscript{23} It thus forms the bridge between the preceding prose and the ensuing oracles, which begin with Baruch and end with Seraiah as the


\textsuperscript{19} Barton and Muddiman, \textit{The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM}, bk. Jer. 45:1.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 81.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 88.

bearer of the word of Jeremiah to Babylon, probably signifying the last phase of the
growth of the tradition by the family loyal to Jeremiah, the Shaphanides.

Moreover, at the heart of this strategic and important transition point lies an oracle
to Baruch based on the same principle as the oracle against Jehoiachin: that Yahweh will
give out justice and mercy without reference to the terms of the Deuteronomic code.
Although it goes too far to call Jehoiachin or Baruch a righteous sufferer, or “suffering
servant,” it is clear that Baruch can no longer claim exemption from suffering as he may
have felt entitled to under the Deuteronomic code for his faithfulness to the Torah,
Yahweh and his prophet, Jeremiah. Yahweh exercises his own freedom, and in so doing
shows that already the Deuteronomic code has been shattered, thus paving the way for
some expression of some new relationship, some new covenant, as announced in the
Book of Consolation.

The Oracles against Jehoiachin and the Nations

The Oracles against the Nations appear elsewhere than in their place in the LXX
following 25:13 (the center of the book) to become the penultimate section of the MT.
They also are in a different order from the LXX. Many scholars agree that, though rarely
read, the oracles against the nations contain “some of the finest poetry in the entire
prophetic canon” and they serve an important theological function: to build up the weak
faith of Israel and remove the charge of injustice from God.\textsuperscript{24} The way in which they
accomplish these theological functions is of importance to us.

When we turn to the first half of the OAN, the oracles against the nations, we find two similar principles at work: the date given in 46:2 is the same as that given in 45:1, and we find the principle of Yahweh dispensing judgment and salvation without any reference to the Deuteronomic code.

This collection of oracles is marked not only by the temporal marker in 46:2, anchoring the oracles in the year 604 B.C.E., momentous for world events external to Judah (Nebuchadnezzar’s victory at Carchemish), as well as the crucial event within Judah (Jehoiakim’s rejection of the prophetic word recorded in Jeremiah 36).25 But in addition to this concrete historical marker, several times throughout the oracles the time of salvation for these other nations is promised (beacherit hayomim, “in the latter days”) a stock phrase in the prophets to refer to the eschatological future.26 Thus, an event rooted in history points to an eschatological future shared with not only Judah and a restored Israel, but also the nations who have previously been their enemies. It became part of the exilic longing for the covenant God of Israel to establish his power and rule in the world. It was an expectation that extended to the first century CE.27 It is the principle upon which they share the blessings of the eschatological age with a renewed Israel. Like the oracle against Jehoiachin, it is unconnected to the Deuteronomic code.

The OAN divides roughly in half with the first half consisting of oracles against eight nations that share two things: they all historically were enemies of Israel, and all of

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them appeared in some section of the nation’s canonical history. They appear
geographically ordered, so that a wave of judgment beginning in the west moves east and
south, including the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, Kedar (Arabian tribes on
the peninsula) and Elam.

At the end of the first oracle against Egypt is a mini-book of consolation (46:27-
28) promising the principle of justice and kindness that God will exercise toward his
people. Most surprisingly, and without any explanation, God applies the same principle
to Egypt (46:26), Moab (48:47), Ammon (49:6) and Elam (49:39). Yahweh allows
Jeremiah to intercede on behalf of the Philistines (47:6), Moab (48:9), possibly Edom
(49:19), and even confesses at one point how he mourns over the destruction he is
bringing on Moab (48:36). Many of these nations are receiving the same kind of
treatment from Yahweh that Judah did: punishment for their sins, compassion on their
condition, and the promise of restoration. Instructive is the example of Edom (49:7-22),
for whom this oracle parallels the oracle in Obadiah and appears to be an “unmitigated
statement of divine harshness.” Yet it includes the unexpected promise in the middle that
Yahweh will defend the orphans and widows of Edom (49:11).28 The final oracle against
Elam includes a reference to the “four winds of heaven,” using cosmic, eschatological
language, extending the principle to all nations.29 In addition, just as with Judah, there is

no requirement of covenant-faithfulness to bring this about. This echoes the covenant-


distantiation from the Deuteronomic code that first appears in the oracle against Jehoiachin. As Robertson observes:

“... After 46 verses of severe condemnation, a sudden turn of perspective introduces the prediction that the Lord will restore the fortunes of Moab in days to come (48:47). The same startling projected turn in the future appears in the Lord’s word concerning Ammon and Elam (49:6, 39). The concept of the Lord’s restoring the fortunes of non-Israelite nations is all the more remarkable in view of Jeremiah’s regularly using the same expression to describe the restoration of his people Israel (30:18; 32:44; 33:11; 33:25-26). Whatever blessings of restoration belong to the nation of Israel, the Lord offers equally and exactly to every other nation and people ...”

On this surprising and unexpected theological note, at least from the perspective of the Deuteronomic code, the terrifying, beautiful, savage oracle against Babylon begins.

The Oracles against Jehoiachin and Babylon

The second half of the OAN consists of oracles against Babylon, for which there are no restoration parallels with the experience of Judah, but only a promise of destruction. Yet many scholars have noted how Babylon, more than the eight nations which preceded in the OAN, appears to be raised to some kind of eschatological literary status, of which much use is made in both sections of Daniel (chs. 3 and 7), in the New Testament and other post-Hebrew Bible writings. Yet, this created a problem. The problem of the prosperity of Babylon apart from Deuteronomic observance was clearly a challenge for the exilic and postexilic community.

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31 E.g., Susanna 5.

2 Esd 3:28–36 28 “Then I said in my heart, Are the deeds of those who inhabit Babylon any better? Is that why it has gained dominion over Zion? 29 For when I came here I saw ungodly deeds without number, and my soul has seen many sinners during these thirty years. And my heart failed me, 30 because I have seen how you endure those who sin, and have spared those who act wickedly, and have destroyed your people, and protected your enemies, 31 and have not shown to anyone how your way may be comprehended. Are the deeds of Babylon better than those of Zion? 32 Or has another nation known you besides Israel? Or what tribes have so believed the covenants as these tribes of Jacob? 33 Yet their reward has not appeared and their labor has borne no fruit. For I have traveled widely among the nations and have seen that they abound in wealth, though they are unmindful of your commandments. 34 Now therefore weigh in a balance our iniquities and those of the inhabitants of the world; and it will be found which way the turn of the scale will incline. 35 When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in your sight? Or what nation has kept your commandments so well? 36 You may indeed find individuals who have kept your commandments, but nations you will not find.”

Yet when judgment came against Babylon, it found no basis in Deuteronomic non-observance. Once again, we see the principle in place in the extension of judgment or mercy unconnected to Deuteronomic observance, first observed in the oracle against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24-30.

The judgment against Babylon in 2 Esdras 15:34-45 appears in cosmic and meteorological phenomena, just as the judgment against Elam, which ended the first half of the OAN. This takes on greater significance when one realizes that later generations had the opportunity to observe that Jeremiah’s word against Babylon appeared to be unfulfilled. The predicted fall of Babylon did not actually occur until 539 when Cyrus the Persian king captured it, and even then it did not appear to experience the immediate

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33 It also forms the basis for the eschatological vision of Revelation 17-18
wholesale destruction described in the oracle, although later the city did, in time, fall into ruins.\textsuperscript{34}

Finally, a short prose section follows where Seraiah receives a charge from Jeremiah. He is to write down the oracle and read it to the exiles. They gather on the bank of the river in Babylon in an ironic recasting of the unsuccessful attempt of chapter 36.\textsuperscript{35} By placing this account here, the authority of Jeremiah is conferred as well to Seraiah, probably succeeding Baruch, and thus he (or one of his scribes) can take the final chapter, adapted from the end of the DtrH, and arrange it for his own theological purposes, retaining the new theological distinctive first conferred in the oracle against Jehoiachin in 22:24-30.

Yet perhaps what most strikingly sets the oracle against Babylon apart, and confirms its eschatological, typological status in Jeremiah is, as Brueggemann notes, the strong triple linkage between destruction, moral justification of the destruction and the salvation of Israel.\textsuperscript{36} While the oracle undoubtedly reflects the situation of the later group of exiles preceding the move of Cyrus against Babylon, is clearly not a \textit{vaticinum ex eventu}, or the redactors would have made sure to make the oracles correspond more

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{34} Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, \textit{The IVP Bible Background Commentary}, bk. Jer. 50:2.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{35} For a description and explanation of this phenomenon, see Friebel, \textit{Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts}, 154–166.}

closely with the reality they saw around them. Rather, the construction of Babylon is clearly cast in eschatological terms as the prophetic literature is interpreted to help the people of God face the challenge of life as a covenant people in the new age of world empire initiated under Nebuchadnezzar. Somehow, they would need to find a way to make an entrance onto the world stage, and do so by carefully following a pattern already laid out in the King Collection, and particularly the contrast between Zedekiah and Jehoiachin.

The Oracle against Jehoiachin and Jeremiah 52

Jeremiah 52 feels oddly out of place, following right on the heels of the conclusion to chapter 51 “… Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.” Moreover, this turns out to be true – Jeremiah does not appear in ch. 52. John Calvin, whose commentary on Jeremiah is one of his longest, made no comment on the entire chapter. Yet the chapter has been received as canonical in all extant versions of the book, and marks the merging once again of the LXX and MT versions, both of which place chapter 52 at the end. As


38 The LXX also is missing many of the details of the Babylonian destruction, probably due to its likely Egyptian provenance. While we are focusing mainly on the differences between the DtrH and Jeremiah, it is worth noting that the Chronicler makes drastic changes in the Jehoiachin ending. "Jehoiachin’s story in Chronicles comparable to that in Kings, we are not talking about a word—such as a name of queen mother—or even a phrase that may or may not appear in the Chronicler’s Vorlage. Instead, we are talking about 10 verses (i.e., 159 words) in 2 Kgs 24:8–17 comparable to the parallel text in Chronicles that contains only 2 verses (34 words, 2 Chr 36:9–10). Though the Chronicler abridged the accounts of the two previous kings, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, and of Jehoiachin’s successor, Zedekiah, he shortened the account of Jehoiachin drastically—by 79%, which can be compared to reductions of 53% for
many scholars believe, one of its most important functions is to confirm that Jeremiah’s words of judgment had indeed happened in history as Jeremiah had predicted. Yet, this is only partially true. The oracle against Jehoiachin remained strikingly unfulfilled and becomes the conclusion to the chapter and the entire book. The enormous hostility of the oracle against him contrasts completely with his final position in Jeremiah, unlike his father, Jehoiakim, for whom the judgment of Jeremiah (both book and prophet) is universally negative.


41 Carroll, Jeremiah, 1997, 100.
There are more signs of deliberate editorial framing. Chapter 52, as we have noted, comes nearly verbatim from the end of the DtrH in extant 2 Kings, but the differences matter.42

- First, in Jer. 52:1, reversing the pattern in the King Collection, only the queen mother of Zedekiah receives mention. The oracle against Jehoiachin included the queen mother of Jehoiachin, but not that of Zedekiah at the head of the King Collection.

- A second striking difference is that in place of the story about Gedaliah (which appears in Jeremiah in chapter 41). Jer. 52:28-30 includes a small census in the MT, which is notably missing from the LXX. The purpose of censuses during this time for both the Assyrians and Babylonians was generally for the purposes of determining who was exempt from taxation and other kinds of service, including military service.43 On this read, then, the census of Jeremiah 52:28-30 is probably connected to the special status of the Judahite exiles in being exempt from military service because of their status as exiles, and perhaps also from some form of taxation.

This stands in stark contrast to the censuses described in the history of the Israelite kings, one in the DtrH and one in the Chronicler. In the DtrH, David takes a census of the nation in 2 Samuel 24, which arouses the anger of the Lord. The census was

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42 The discussion as to whether or not Jeremiah ends on a positive or negative note continued to exercise the rabbis. Jacob Neusner, *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, CD-ROM (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 2008), sec. y. Ber. 5.1, 1.2.D–N.

for the purposes of military conscription. The Chronicler records Solomon taking a
census of all the “aliens” who were in the land of Israel (2 Chronicles 2:17) for the
purposes of conscripting them to work in the mines, whereas the Deuteronomic code
required compassion for “aliens” and the possibility of inclusion by conversion within the
Israelite community. This census would serve as a striking contrast and reminder,
situated as it was between the accounts of the inglorious end of Zedekiah and the gradual
restoration of Jehoiachin. It would remind them of the failed monarchy under the Davidic
monarchy marked by military service and heavy taxation, and the conscription of
foreigners for labor, rather than their inclusion in the nation as Deuteronomy
commanded. The census by Nebuchadnezzar exempting them from military service and
some forms of taxation would then serve as a pointer to the easing of these heavy burdens
of the Davidic kingship during their new life in Babylon.

Thus, once again, we see Jehoiachin at a critical historical and literary hinge point
in the nation’s history in exile. The final picture then is one of Jehoiachin raised above
the other kings (a sort of “king among kings”) under the tutelage of the Babylonian
regime. This could also have pointed to a possible future Judahite ruler who would fulfill
the promise of 23:5-6, a wise king who would execute justice and righteousness in the
land and under whom the people would dwell securely. This is less apparent in the LXX,
which records no census list, and may reflect an earlier stage of textual editing, which
also has a less-developed perspective on the role of Jehoiachin.

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44 Deut 1:16, 26:11, 29:11, 31:12.
There is indeed a powerful tension here: the Torah-oriented tradition, represented in Jeremiah by its Deuteronomic orientation, cannot entertain any idea of a recovered monarchy because Jehoiachin was to be without an heir (22:28-30). Yet, almost miraculously, Jehoiachin does indeed appear at the end and may well have been the focus of hopes for a royal restoration so powerful that they could not remain excluded.\footnote{Brueggemann, The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah, 129.}

In other words, the addition of the census list in the MT appears to be deliberate, and reflects the fact that the Davidic monarchy had failed by using its census for military conscription and forced labor, while Nebuchadnezzar recorded a census of the refugees for exclusions from such service. The fact that Zedekiah and Jehoiachin appear on opposite sides of this census list follows the pattern already set in Jeremiah 21-22, where Zedekiah heads the list of the King Collection of oracles, and Jehoiachin concludes it.\footnote{Of course, there is another significant difference in ch. 52. The description of the destruction of Jerusalem also separates the two kings, something with the oracle in Jer. 21-22 describes as envisioned, and the ch. 52 views as having already happened.}

Here, however, Jehoiachin occupies the final place rather than the “Branch” and appears as some open-ended symbol of hope.

Thus, we can conclude that von Rad was correct to revise Martin Noth’s theory of the Deuteronomic History and see Jehoiachin as a symbol of hope for the exiles.\footnote{see Schipper, Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible, 119. McKenzie disagrees. Steven L. McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 161–162.} Instead, the Shaphanides deliberately constructed the ending of Jeremiah to heighten this aspect of Jehoiachin and set him apart as a transitional figure from the rest of the kings included in the DtrH and the Chronicler. Jeremiah’s perspective is unique in this regard,
and may provide an explanation for why Matthew included Jehoiachin in the genealogy of Jesus, but none of the other kings in the King Collection, although this is difficult to prove.

Once again, we see the influence of the Shaphanide scribal circle in preparing the hermeneutical framework. As Mark Leuchter has pointed out, the rehabilitation of Jehoiachin in Babylon after 37 years did not mean a revival of the Davidic kingship, but it certainly strengthened and increased the influence of the Shaphanide scribal circle, a group with Levitical heritage and ties. This same group was responsible for the formation of Jeremiah 26-36 and 37-44 in the MT, making them also responsible for moving the OAN to the end of the book, a move that we have seen has theological ties to the oracle against Jehoiachin.

The Development of Jehoiachin in LXX and MT

Thus, there is a development from the LXX to the MT that shares a common theological viewpoint with the King Collection of oracles, namely that Jehoiachin appears last in the line for judgment, and that Yahweh acts without reference to the law of the King or the Deuteronomic code. It is a perspective that persists in chapters 45-52 in

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the MT. The MT represents the final stage in a theological understanding of the place of Jehoiachin in the *Heilsgeschichte* of Israel. We can assume that the group in Egypt, which has Jeremiah with them against his will, likely looked toward a vision of the future that tied the subjugation of all nations to the destruction of Israel, rather than seeing God’s judgment on Israel and blessing of foreign powers as part of the divine plan. This could have been a motivation to place the OAN immediately after 25:13a, as it appears in the LXX. This could explain why, after the return from exile, both textual traditions appeared side-by-side, because the fate of the nations, and especially Babylon, was still unclear. This may not have been a peaceful arrangement, as Babylonian hegemony would have forestalled any attempt to restore the kingdom. Returnees may simply have had to live in a forced détente with one another to avoid giving the current emperor reason to attack again. Nevertheless, under the watchful powers of Babylon, these traditions developed differing views of Jehoiachin, the purposes of God in exile, and visions for the future of the nation. They coexisted with one another, leaving a dramatic tension over the fulfillment of the divine promise to Israel to some future, yet unforeseen, group or individual who would lay claim to the throne of David.

It is probably better to understand the tensions between the two traditions as a deliberate move on the part of later interpretive communities to maintain both traditions, because it was not possible to tell how, when or if the Davidic monarchy might reappear or under what circumstances one could expect it. The Egypt group may have expected that the restoration of the monarchy that would re-assert the old traditions of Joshua and the conquest, and so tied Israel’s troubles with the oracles against the nations in the *Vorlage* of the LXX. The Babylon group seemed to have it had its hopes fixed upon
prosperity in exile after a season of suffering, as they saw in their king, Jehoiachin. The homeland group may have had its hopes set on a descendant of Jehoiachin or on Zedekiah (before his violent end), but as they did not develop their own textual tradition in relation to the ministry of Jeremiah, it is not as germane here. Besides, in only 10 years, it became apparent that Zedekiah would not be the one to revive the monarchy, as the book reports that he died along with his sons in a rather gruesome fashion. In fact, it is possible that one of the reasons the MT received the nod in the canonical process is precisely because there is more in the second temple restoration to suggest that this might be the case with the accession of Zerubbabel, a descendant of Jehoiachin. He was the one Zechariah (3:8) identified as the “Branch” of the line of David, spoken of in Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15 and Isaiah 11:1. However, we should note, that at the end of the HB canon, all descendants of David had faded from view. This appears to confirm the oracle against Jehoiachin in chapter 22, and perhaps provides another reason for the preference given to the MT in the canonical lists vis-à-vis the LXX.

Nevertheless, both traditions have unresolved tensions within them. We have just mentioned the tension between Jeremiah 22:24-30, 36:40 and 52:31-34, a tension exacerbated by the fact that the large blocks of prose material that separate 1-25 from the OAN in the MT contains accounts of the ends of the kings Jeremiah has prophesied against, except for Shallum (Jehoahaz) and Jehoiachin. Pharaoh Neco banished Shallum in 609 B.C.E. to Egypt where he died. It is somewhat surprising that he never became a figure of hope for the Egyptian community the way that Jehoiachin did for the

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50 Job, *Jeremiah’s Kings*, 119.
Babylonian exiles. Yet it is likely that Shallum (Jehoahaz) could not have been seen as a sign of hope like Jehoiachin because he, unlike Jehoiachin, had stipulations of covenant-wrongdoing attached to him, and he had never surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, as Jeremiah had commanded.

There were further tensions to resolve. The restoration in the second temple period never amounted to anything approaching the military might celebrated in the records of the conquest of Canaan and the campaigns of David. It was a hope that seemed frustrated in the end. Perhaps it is this point of frustration and tension that characterizes both works and needs further examination. Both works seem to leave the future an open question as to how the Davidic monarchy will revive. This would prove fertile ground for the Maccabees and other groups, including the early Jesus-followers, as they saw in those unresolved tensions a possibility to reinterpret in the light of new events a way forward in the prophetic plan of God for God’s people. Thus,

“Jeremiah MT has a particular perspective about the exile, in which the themes of judgment and hope exist in an unresolved tension with each other. This tension is expressed both in 52:31–34 at the end of the book, and also in its structure, where words of punishment are juxtaposed with promises about the future. The progression from judgment to restoration, found in the book of Ezekiel, does not exist in Jeremiah. While there are promises about an end of the exile, this is not yet in sight.”51

However, just because the end was not in sight for the canonical work of Jeremiah did not mean that there were no clues on which later interpreters could build. One of those orienting points was the prophetic framing of Jehoiachin, beginning with his oracle

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and ending with him on the world stage as something of a number 2 under Evil-Merodach.
Whether or not one can find something solid to build on from this portrayal of Jehoiachin may depend on one’s theological and philosophical presuppositions. Yet it is a felt need the author(s) created in the text by reframing the sense of an ending to the DtrH and completely resetting it in the canonical form of Jeremiah (in both the LXX and MT canonical versions).¹

Those who build on enlightenment-based philosophical assumptions and 19th-century German Protestant revisionist confessionalism depend on definitions of authorship, history and rationality that often lead to the view, first put forward by Duhm, that the text is confused and confusing. Those who see more significance in anti-enlightenment critiques, such as Foucault’s, often have less confidence that these critical categories can adequately explain ancient interpretation of sacred texts.² Our purpose is simply to observe that this tradition has been used and appropriated by later generations. Their reasons for doing so are likely more penetrable than some scholars seem to think. Rather than simply identifying the name Jehoiachin around which to center interpretations, Baruch, Seraiah and the Shaphanide scribal circle created hermeneutical categories in Jeremiah and labored to arrange the final composition of the book of


² To delve more into this matter, there are two excellent recent works that bear consideration, one by a Christian scholar and the other by a Jewish scholar: Carolyn J. Sharp, Wrestling the Word: The Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Believer (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010); Baden, The Composition of the Pentateuch.
Jeremiah so that future generations of Israelites might be prepared for a future and a hope which was as yet unseen. One of those hermeneutical categories was the way in which the tradition framed king Jehoiachin for future generations. For evidence of this, we will look at some likely sources (the rabbis, Josephus, the Qumran community, the Gospel of Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews) and an unlikely source (The Acts of the Apostles).

**Josephus’ Ideal King Theory**

Louis Feldman published a paper in 1995 that investigated the special treatment that Jehoiachin got in the works of Josephus. It will be helpful as we seek to develop hermeneutical paths for how the prophetic framing of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah appeared in later writers. It is worth remembering in this regard that there is no doubt that Jehoiachin was a historical figure, that the events described about him in the DtrH, Chronicler and Jeremiah are reasonably accurate where they agree. Yet it is out of this decidedly unlikely historical figure that a literary type developed which formed a symbol (myth) of hope for the exiles. The one area which Feldman does not investigate, and which we will here, is the unique perspective on Jehoiachin in Jeremiah and its differences from both the DtrH and the Chronicler’s account.

are axiomatic in the scholarly literature. Feldman provides an excellent history and summary of the various proposals to try to understand Josephus’ promise versus what he actually writes.

What Feldman does not consider (because no one has really investigated) is whether there actually existed a different theological framework for Jehoiachin in the scribal circle surrounding the Jeremiah corpus. One possible explanation for the differences between the DtrH and Jeremiah’s portrait of Jehoiachin is their differing views of the future. The DtrH believes that the kingship is largely at fault, and thus adds the appropriate formula to the account of Jehoiachin (“… He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…”), while the Jeremianic scribal circle astutely observes that nothing in any of the histories indicates precisely what that evil was, as it does with the other kings. According to Josephus, the details of what we are calling an alternate account are as follows:

“...Jehoiachin succeeded [Jehoiakim] in the kingdom, whose mother’s name was Nehushta; she was a citizen of Jerusalem. He reigned three months and ten days... But a terror seized on the king of Babylon, who had given the kingdom to Jehoiachin, and that immediately; he was afraid that he should bear him a grudge, because of his killing his father, and thereupon should make the country revolt from him; wherefore he sent an army, and besieged Jehoiachin in Jerusalem; but because he was of a gentle and just disposition[ο δε φυσει χρηστος ον και δικαιος], he did not desire to see the city endangered on his account, but he took his mother and kindred, and delivered them to the commanders sent by the king of Babylon, and accepted of their oaths, that neither should they suffer any harm, nor the city; which agreement they did not observe for a single year, for the king of Babylon did not keep it, but gave orders to his generals to take all that were in the city captives, both the youth and the handicraftsmen, and bring them bound to him; their number was ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-two; as also Jehoiachin, and his mother and friends; and when these were brought to him, he kept them in custody, and appointed Jehoiachin’s uncle, Zedekiah, to be king...”

Granted, none of these details appears in Jeremiah’s account, and there is no way to verify them from Babylonian records either. However, what holds Josephus’s account together is his description of the nature of Jehoiachin as “kind and just/righteous,” something he repeats throughout his *Antiquities*. Feldman believes that Josephus has directly contradicted and changed the description of Jehoiachin in the DtrH and the Chronicler. Feldman notes accounts in Josephus not found in the Bible, and accounts in the Bible that are not found in Josephus, in which case, Josephus seems to be going directly against the DtrH and the Chronicler. However, there may be clues to another account of Jehoiachin that remain vestigially in Jeremiah’s account of the end of the DtrH.

The appellation δίκαιος (*dikaios*, just/righteous) could well refer, as Feldman notes, to a virtue highly prized in Greek society, the greatest of virtues in the writings of Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch. However, where might the appellation χρηστός given to Jehoiachin come from? It is possible that Josephus, relying on the LXX’s description of Evil-Merodach’s treatment of Jehoiachin: καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ χρηστὰ (*kai elalesen autou kresta*, “he spoke kindly to him”), may well have added details that he had heard from other sources, or felt it fit the character of a person who would receive such treatment from his captor. This receives support from Jon Levenson’s observation that the change of clothes, based on recent Assyriological studies, may well have indicated the

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5 Ibid., 24.

establishment of a treaty of friendship between Evil-Merodach and Jehoiachin. If so, this would strengthen the identification of Jehoiachin as χρηστός. This makes more sense when we see Feldman’s conclusion about Josephus’s attitude toward the oral Torah.

“...Josephus (Ant. 4.196), before beginning his summary of the Mosaic code, goes out of his way to stress that “all is here written as he left it; nothing have we added for the sake of embellishment, nothing which has not been bequeathed by Moses.” That he proceeds to violate his promise in numerous places would seem to indicate that he understood the Mosaic law to include not only what was written in the Pentateuch but also the Oral Torah which, according to tradition, was communicated to Moses at the same time that he received the written Torah, or viewed more liberally what constitutes adding or subtracting...”

Importantly, Feldman draws a comparison between Josephus’s portrait of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin. This is appropriate, given the Jeremianic literary placement of Jehoiachin at the end of the “King Collection” and placing Zedekiah at head. Feldman wisely observes that Josephus makes use of an allusion to Plato’s famous allegory of the ship: Zedekiah faced destruction because of his bad advisors, much as the captain of the ship listened to the sailors rather than the navigator.

Perhaps most importantly, Feldman observes also that there were differences in the rabbinic tradition regarding Zedekiah, and believes that the same thing may have taken place with Jehoiachin. This makes sense in the account of the DtrH and Chronicler, but not in the account given in Jeremiah. In Jeremiah, both in the King Collection, and in chapter 52, the accounts of Jehoiachin appear as polar opposites. Thus, the possibility


9 Ibid., 17.
(and it can only be a possibility, as no verification can be adduced) remains that there was an account of Jehoiachin that came from Jeremiah himself or from the Shaphanide scribal circle. Yet, it is unlikely that one could ever prove this the case. No additional account exists. If it was an oral tradition, it only appears preserved in Josephus. Further, it would not in the least discount the many excellent observations Feldman makes about the apologetic purposes of Josephus, his own vested interests, and his concern for his own Hasmonean dynasty, a rival to those who believed that the Messiah would be descended from David. Nevertheless, the fact that a differing account of Jehoiachin exists in Jeremiah provides at least a better possible explanation for Josephus’s description of Jehoiachin. Some further confirmation for this arises in the differences between the rabbis’ descriptions of Zedekiah (which are conflicting) and Jehoiachin (which are overwhelmingly positive).

**The Rabbis’ Atonement Theory**

Jehoiachin is something of a hero in the rabbinic tradition. According to the Mishnah, at the rebuilding of the temple one of the gates received Jehoiachin’s name (Middoth 2:6). *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 19.6 provides a record of Jehoiachin giving the keys of the temple back to God because the Jews were unworthy of them. Others claimed he had brought the ark from the temple in Jerusalem to Babylon and erected a synagogue.

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there. He was associated with great scholarship and teaching in exile. Yet this abrupt change in the description of Jehoiachin in Josephus and the rabbis is difficult to explain if one only has the accounts of the DtrH and the Chronicler. Feldman believes that this is because the rabbis believed that Jehoiachin had repented. This is indeed possible, but not a necessary interpretation of the event recorded in the *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 19.6. In that account he demonstrated covenant faithfulness by refusing marital relations with his wife because she was menstruating, thus following the Deuteronomic code. However, it seems more likely that the rabbis here believed that Jehoiachin by one act of obedience had achieved pardon for his sins.

In fact, Jeremy Schipper has pointed out that the rabbis developed a theory of atonement based on this account and used this to justify the overturning of the oracle

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13 This interpretation, not surprisingly, has had its Christian detractors. “The Lord had declared, and that not without an oath, that Jechonias should be ערייר without children. The Talmudists do so interpret "ערייר׃ "R. Judah saith, All they of whom it is said, ערייר ¥י, These shall be ערייאו, without children; they shall have no children. And those of whom it is said, ערייר ¥י They shall die without children; they bury their children.” [Lev. 20:20, 21.]So Kimchi also upon the place; “The word ערייר (saith he) means this; That his sons shall die in his life, if he shall now have sons: but if he shall not now have sons, he never shall. But our Rabbins of blessed memory say, That he repented in prison. And they say moreover, Oh! how much doth repentance avail, which evacuates a penal edict! for it is said, ‘Write ye this man childless;’ but, he repenting, this edict turned to his good,” &c. “R. Jochanan saith, His carrying away expiated. For when it is said, ‘Write this man childless,’ after the carrying away it is said, ‘The sons of Coniah, Assir his son, Shealtiel his son.’ ” These things are in Babyl. Sanhedrim, where these words are added, “Assir his son, because his mother conceived him in prison.” But the words in the original [1 Chron. 3:17.] are these, Now the sons of Jechonias bound [or imprisoned] were Shealtiel his son. Which version both the accents and the order of the words confirm: for Zakeph hung over ערייר, to which Munach beneath ערייר serves, persuades that it is a conjunct construction; to wit, that ערייר, Jechoniah, and Assir bound, should be joined together, that is, a substantive and an adjective. And the word בְּנֵי his son, placed after Assir, Shealtiel, not after ערייר bound, fixeth the genealogy in Salathiel, not in Assir at all.” John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew -- I Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1979), 13–14.
against Jehoiachin. There were three positions staked out by the rabbis during this discourse: Rabbi Judah, pointing to his interpretation of the account of Cain, believed that exile atoned for half of one’s sins:

“To begin with, it is written [about Cain], ‘And I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer’ (Gen. 4:14). “And afterward: ‘And he dwelt in the land of wandering’ (Gen. 4:14). [Schachter, p. 237, n. 7: The other half of the course, ‘to be a fugitive’ was remitted because of his exile.]”

Rabbi Judah specifically believed that the experience of exile outweighed the three evils declared in the opening oracle in the King Collection (21:8-9), sword, famine and pestilence. Yet Rabbi Yohanan responded:

Exile atones for everything, for it is said, ‘Thus says the Lord, Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah’ (Jer. 22:30). ‘After [the king] was exiled, it is written, ‘And the sons of Jehoniah, the same is Assir, Shealtiel, his son ...’ (1 Chr. 3:17). [So he was not childless, and through exile he had atoned for his sins.]”

The point here, as Schipper points out, is that the interpreters are looking for ways to explain what seems to be such an obvious contradiction. He notes that this is just as much a problem for critical interpreters as well. Somewhat later, the theory appears that Feldman notes in the Midrash Leviticus Rabbah, namely that Jehoiachin by one act of obedience had atoned for his sins. In both cases, there is a clear concern to reconcile what appears to be an obvious contradiction in the text and an unfulfilled prophecy, with

14 Schipper, “’Exile Atones for Everything’.”
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
appeals to an atonement theory for Jehoiachin, although this never appears in any of the canonical accounts.

“By way of reward for his continence he was blessed with distinguished posterity. Not only was Zerubbabel, the first governor of Palestine after the destruction of the temple, a grandson of Jehoiachin’s, but also the Messiah himself will be a descendant of his.”\textsuperscript{18}

Therefore, clearly, there has been a progression from the LXX through the MT to Josephus, where Jehoiachin appears as an idealized king, to later rabbinic tradition where he becomes the focus of an atonement theory for exile, and finally becomes the progenitor of the messiah. Therefore, when Jesus-followers began making the case for Jesus, it would not be surprising to find Jehoiachin’s name.

**A Parallel Case? Melchizedek in Hebrews**

Much like the historical figure of Jehoiachin, the amount of ink spilled on the subject of Melchizedek appears to be orders of magnitude in inverse proportion to that in the Bible. Certainly, Melchizedek receives more attention than Jehoiachin in descriptions of the kingship of Jesus, and if we can see how the figure of Melchizedek appears in Hebrews, it may shed additional light on a way in which, even in Jeremiah’s time, historical figures received eschatological interpretations. Since this developed well within the first century CE, it represents an interpretive tradition that likely had some precursors in prior hermeneutical models, including Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} Louis Ginzburg, *Bible Times and Characters From Joshua to Esther*, vol. 4, Legends of the Jews (New York: Cosimo, 2005), 286.

“...at the heart of Hebrews 4-10 is a series of Old Testament texts. Some readers suggest that these chapters are actually structured as a midrash on Psalm 110, Genesis 14, and Jeremiah 31... We must admit that his reading of Genesis 14 is very creative. At a minimum we can say that he reads Genesis 14 through the lens of both Psalm 110 and his confessions about Jesus. What he believes about Jesus must be true. But what he reads in Psalm 110 and Genesis 14 must also be true. So he cannot misread one in the name of another. He must read them all well, and they all must cohere.”

Eight times the writer of Hebrews refers to Jesus as a priest κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ “according to the order of Melchizedek”, adopting the LXX’s translation of the Hebrew passage of Psalm 110:4, which itself has several possible interpretations, but is commonly taken to refer to Genesis 14:18-20, a perspective which the writer of Hebrews agrees with and utilizes. For our purposes, we notice some immediate parallels to Jehoiachin: a king with very little history recorded in the canonical Scriptures rises in later interpretive traditions to some status of importance and a future for a new Israel without a temple. For Jehoiachin, this happens in the Shaphanide editing of his final appearance in Jeremiah. For Melchizedek, it happens in the psalmist’s appropriation of Melchizedek as a type of the Davidic king.

Melchizedek appears out of nowhere and then, just as abruptly, he disappears from the narrative and the conversation with the king of Sodom continues as if the
encounter with Melchizedek had never happened. We notice also the parallels with how Jehoiachin appears in the King Collection in an important topical position in the collection, and then only appears briefly a few other times in the book, the final mention occurring at the end of Jeremiah 52. What is of greatest significance in Genesis 14:18-20 for our understanding of the Hebrews passages is the way in which the writer of Hebrews interprets this literally, in a move similar to the literary interpretation of the historical figure of Jehoiachin.  24

24 Tantlevskij’s exhaustive investigation of the Gnostic interpretations of Melchizedek demonstrates that the Melchizedek of Psalm 110, based solely on the Old Testament evidence, could simply be the forerunner of the Davidic heir to the throne, or he could be a new Genesis 14 Melchizedek, a Melchizedek redivivus. Igor R. Tantlevskij, Melchizedek Redivivus in Qumran: Some Peculiarities of Messianic Ideas and Elements of Mysticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Qumran Chronicle 12/1 (Kraków-Mogilany: The Enigma Press, 2004), 10. However, (and this is important for our understanding of the writer of Hebrews’ appropriation of Melchizedek’s historical figure) Fitzmyer points this out in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “‘Now This Melchizedek’ (Heb 7:1),” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 25, no. 3 (Jl 1963): 308. This point will be important to the writer of Hebrews, who knows that under the Aaronic priesthood, priests must be able to demonstrate the genealogy that gives them the right to the priesthood. This much seems clear: one interpretation (that of the LXX) seems preferable to others. Yet, the variety of interpretations given in the translations left room for much speculative development of the figure of Melchizedek in the post-New Testament Gnostic writers, once they had Melchizedek’s apparent reappearance in the form of Jesus Christ as a historical reference point to build upon. While the options noted above seem preferable to others, there remains a level of ambiguity in the Old Testament's presentation of Melchizedek. The variation between Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Syriac translations as well as the sparse evidence in the text itself makes it difficult to understand Melchizedek as a theological figure solely from within the Old Testament context. Yet, we cannot ignore him theologically, because of his obvious relationship to, and superiority over, Abram in the Genesis account, and probable connection to the הָדַקְתָּם of the covenant in Genesis 15:6. The passage in Psalm 110:4 only heightens the drama because the union of king and priest in one person appears now attached in some way to God Himself. This less-likely grammatical possibility (“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind; you are an eternal Priest according to the word of Melchizedek”) becomes important in some later post-New Testament Gnostic interpretations of Melchizedek. There, in fact, he is given the figure of the heavenly warrior, the Messiah, and is made equal to or superior to Jesus Christ himself. Interpreters have often wondered about possible connections to the Zadokite priesthood. Weiser believes there is a connection to the Zadokite priesthood. Artur Weiser, The Psalms, a Commentary, trans. Herbert Hartwell, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 695. However, Weiser may overstate the case, because Zadok and his sons led the priesthood during David’s time. Despite the phonetic and perhaps etymological similarities between צְדָקָה and מַלְכִּי־צֶ֙דֶק, Zadok does not unite the office of priest and king into one person, or if so, only in a partial and provisional way, since Abiathar was still serving as well. This point is a matter of some debate. Note the connection also to the king of Ecclesiastes identified by Christensen. D. G. Schley, “Adoni-Zedek,” Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996). Others have speculated that it is a justification for the Hasmonean kingship claims. However, given the ritual background of the royal psalms, it could also be a pre-exilic Psalm, and thus proleptic, rather than a justification for Hasmonean kingship. J. Davila,
However, there is a significant problem for any possible links to Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews is more concerned to identify Jesus as High Priest than to establish his claim to the Israelite throne. Since Melchizedek unites king and priest together, this bolsters his argument for the new high priestly character of Jesus of Nazareth. The impact of any Shaphanide scribal hermeneutics on the writer of Hebrews’ presentation of Melchizedek appears minimal at best. The main similarities between Melchizedek and Jehoiachin are that they both went through the literary transformation from historical personage to a literary type. To understand better any possible influence of the Shaphanide scribal editors on the formation of the New Testament, we turn to the last mention of Jehoiachin in the Christian Scriptures, in the genealogy of Matthew.25

**Jehoiachin in Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus**

The issue of the Davidic succession had not gone away with the passing of years, but rather had increased in strength. Hillel was not the only, but certainly the most famous, Davidide to be identified by genealogy as a possible successor to the throne.26 The last occurrence of Jehoiachin’s name in any canonical Scripture (Hebrew Bible or

25 By the time of the New Testament, both Qumran and the New Testament writers had taken the promise by Nathan in 2 Samuel 7 to refer, not to an endless succession of Davidic kings, but to one eternal king. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 311.

26 Indeed, Brown observes, “…the great Rabbi Hillel is said to have been of Davidic descent on the maternal side; and well into the first Christian millennium, the exilarch or head of the Jewish community in Babylon claimed Davidic descent. Eusebius (Ecd. Hist. III xii, xix-xx, xxxii 3-4) mentions persecution of Jews of Davidic descent under the Roman Emperors Vespasian (A.D. 79), Domitian (96), and Trajan (120). Ibid., 87. According to Midrash Rabbah XCVIII 8 on Gen 49:10, Hillel’s Davidic pedigree was discovered in a book in Jerusalem. Jacob Neusner describes the vicissitudes of the rival possibilities for Davidic ancestry in Jacob Neusner, Development of a Legend, repr. of 1970 Brill edition (New York: Global Academic Publishing, 2001), 290, 296.
New Testament) is in the genealogy Matthew constructs for Jesus. By all accounts, it is a stylized genealogy, compressed into representative figures, divided up by periods of Israel’s history. This genealogy was important because it helped Matthew’s claim that Jesus was the promised king of David in the ongoing differences between the Jesus-followers and emergent rabbinic Judaism. By drawing on genealogies in Ruth 4:18-22 and 1 Chronicles 2:5ff, Matthew strove to connect Jesus to the genealogies used to document claims to the royal throne in ancient Israel. In addition, for both Luke and Matthew, the only evangelists to record genealogies for Jesus, the infancy accounts, and especially the genealogies, are the places where the Hebrew Bible and the gospels most directly meet.

27 J. Andrew Overman, Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 160. Matthew’s Gospel represented the movement of the new community in distinction from formative Judaism. Both communities sought to root their new movements in older Jewish traditions. Moreover, one of the most striking ways in which Matthew gives a frame of reference to the career of Jesus (in much the same way that Jeremiah frames Jehoiachin prophetically in a particular way) is in the fulfillment citations found in the birth story of Matthew. Ibid., 67, 73. However, prior to the birth story appears the genealogy. R. E. Brown’s masterful work, The Birth of the Messiah, documents how Matthew added Joseph and Jesus to existing genealogies, including a popular genealogy of the Davidic Messiah. However, he structured it in a particular way to highlight certain things about the history of the nation of Israel that would legitimize the claim of Jesus to the throne of David. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 70, 83.


29 Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 497. Brown concludes that the narratives are not historical, but simply accounts designed to parallel OT accounts like a Star of David rising, the OT story of Balaam, the slaughter of the infants by Pharaoh, the Joseph who dreams dreams and goes to Egypt, etc. However, this simply begs the question of why the NT writers would base accounts that opponents could easily have contradicted if the final canonical form took shape by the end of the first century. ("...a post-A.D. 70 date. At the same time, the use of Matthew by Ignatius of Antioch (see below) necessitates a date of composition of the gospel before the early years of the 2d century." John P. Meier, “Matthew Gospel Of,” Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 624.). Brown claims somewhere in the 80s (45)), according to the standard two-source hypothesis, in which case the two sources had already attained their fixed form before then. Even if the infancy narratives appeared afterward, as Brown suggests, they could not have been concocted whole cloth. They must have been circulating in some form that probably predates
After Wellhausen, of course, genealogical research had a good deal of difficulty because scholars attempted to mine them for information that corresponded to 19th century definitions of history. It was not until Robert Wilson’s work on genealogy that scholars once again focused on the fact that the genealogies were not given to satisfy the demands of 19th-century historians, and that an individual – especially a king – could have several genealogies according to the purpose for which they were needed. Yet, there is a crucial aspect of the genealogy of Jesus unaccounted for in either Brown or Wilson. This is the inclusion of Jehoiachin in the genealogy of Jesus. Brown is certainly aware of the problem. Yet, while his explanation represents a possibility within the

James’ proto-evangelion of the 60s (as Brown notes, they are more historical than James’ Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 33.) and thus would have had plenty of opportunity for scrutiny. The fact that they do not have external witnesses is simply the problem of many of the stories in the Bible – the events were too insignificant or embarrassing to the ruling powers that they generally never made it into published historical accounts. Brown notes this himself (“Since there was discussion about the Davidic ancestry of the Messiah among Jews in Jesus' time, there may well have been attempts to trace genealogically the Royal (and messianic) line within the House of David. Were their official lists of the post-exilic royal family in existence in the first century A.D.? The possibility that there were comes from the information (stemming from Julius Africanus) that Herod the Great burns the archives of Jewish families (including those descended from Ruth, and thus Davidic), so that he would not be embarrassed by references to his own base origins. Presumably he would have been most interested in genealogies that could challenge his position as king; presumably, to, he would not have been successful in destroying all the lists, so that some birth records of the Davidic royal line could have survived…” Ibid., 87.

30 Robert R. Wilson, “Genealogy, Genealogies,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996). The thematic structuring of genealogies, however, was not new, but was already in the scholarly literature in Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel, 254. See also Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 65. for the application to Matthew.

31 Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, 83. Hoffman provides a better explanation for Matthew's arithmetic: “Perhaps the solution lies in Matthew’s departure from the normal “begat” formula at 1:16. There he uses the passive (egenēthē) rather than the active form of the verb with reference to Mary (ex hēs, “by whom”). Jesus is born of Mary and, thus, Mary should count as one of the (now) fourteen names in group three. Mary is only one of five women in Matthew’s genealogy; why should she alone be counted as a separate “generation”? Simply put, the other women shared with their husbands in the procreation of descendants and Matthew counts them and their husbands each as one generation. In the case of Mary and Joseph, however, Joseph clearly had no part in the biological procreation of Jesus; only Mary did. While Joseph is mentioned only as Mary’s husband (cf. discussion of textual variants in commentaries), he is still counted since he did indeed serve as Jesus’ earthly father.” Huffman, “Genealogy,” 254. Moore first put forward this interpretation. Moore, “Fourteen Generations,” 99.
Septuagint, when the Septuagint wanted to mention Jehoiachin clearly, it was quite capable of doing so simply by stating, as we have seen in Baruch 1:3 previously: “…Ἰεχονίου υἱοῦ Ιωακιμ βασιλέως Ιουδα…” (“…Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah…”). Further, the context always made it clear whether it was Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin who is being referred to, or the text simply referred to him as “…Ἰωακεὶμ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ…” (1 Esdras 1:41). Indeed, in English translations of the Septuagint there is never any difficulty figuring out to which person the writer refers. While a simple spelling mistake could possibly explain the inclusion of Jehoiachin in Matthew’s genealogy, we must investigate other solutions as well.

Another stronger suggestion for these kings disappearing from Matthew’s genealogy is that all of them received judgment oracles in the King Collection. Yet this does not explain the presence of Jehoiachin, who also received a judgment oracle—except that Jehoiachin alone, connected as he is by similar theological patterns in the oracles to Baruch, OAN and chapter 52 of Jeremiah, somehow escapes the curse, and thus apparently reenters the royal lineage.

In addition, again, here the unique contribution of the Shaphanide scribal editors’ framing of Jehoiachin can supply an explanation. Matthew may not rely on just the Chronicler. Indeed, it is not difficult to draw parallels between the career of Jeremiah and Jesus, and thus it would not at all be surprising for Matthew to use a hermeneutical

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32 Huffman, “Genealogy,” 254. Further, the LXX omits an additional 3 kings from the list in Chronicles, but keeps Jehoiachin. For a discussion of the interpretive options, see Waetjen, “The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew,” 207.

33 That this is a critical hermeneutical problem can be seen in Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” 38.
framework first developed among the Shaphanide scribal circle responsible for the works of Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{34} It seems from Matthew 1:17 that Matthew intends to divide Israel’s history into three periods: Abraham to David, David to the exile, and the exile to Christ. Jehoiakim is never a marker of exile in either canonical or non-canonical literature. As we have noted above, it is more likely for later writings such as Ezekiel and Esther to date the exile to the time of Jehoiachin’s leaving Jerusalem, 10 years before the city itself perished under Zedekiah. Thus, it seems intentional that Matthew includes Jehoiachin in his genealogy and eliminates all the other kings from the King Collection in Jeremiah 21-22. Thus, Matthew is able to make a direct connection between Josiah (the last “good” king in Israel), Jehoiachin (the linking king in the King Collecting between the Davidic kingship and the enigmatic Branch of Jer 23:5-8) and the ancestry to Jesus.

Of course, this is immediately problematic, because of the oracle against Jehoiachin that he would remain childless. While it is true that Matthew relies on Chronicles, and we cannot be certain that he has the oracle from Jeremiah 22 in mind, by the time that he was writing, the book of Jeremiah would have reached its canonical form including the oracle about Jehoiachin. Thus, it is indeed curious that Matthew only includes Jehoiachin in his genealogy. In fact, the only textual reason for such an inclusion appears in the reordered King Collection in Jeremiah, not Chronicles or Kings. So the issue of the succession of Jehoiachin is not just a hermeneutical issue for the rabbis, but for the nascent Jesus-followers’ movement as well. They also needed to find an explanation for the inclusion of Jehoiachin in the royal genealogy of Jesus. In the King

Collection, Jehoiachin forms the final link before the promise of the “Branch” in Jeremiah 23:5-6. The Septuagint translates Jeremiah 23:5 to read:

*The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch [ἀνατολὴν δικαίαν, “dawn of righteousness”], and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. “*

Luke appears to refer to this in Luke 1:78 in the prophecy of Zechariah, when the high priest says regarding the coming of the infant Jesus:

*Luke 1:78 (NRSV) By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high [ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὑψους] will break upon us,*

Indeed, this seemed to be a common expectation among non-Jesus-followers as well (John 7:37-44). Thus, this inclusion of Jehoiachin in Matthew’s genealogy may help Matthew’s case to build a royal genealogy for Jesus. It is important because he faced stiff competition. Formative rabbinic Judaism, which shared the same hermeneutical matrix, but was unconvinced of the messiahship of Jesus, also laid claim to the interpretive tradition of Israel’s history. Further, Matthew was writing around the same time as Josephus. Josephus was writing an apology for the Jewish nation to the Roman Empire and made a much different use of Jehoiachin. In fact, it appears that Matthew occupies something of a middle ground between Josephus and the rabbis, who lionized Jehoiachin, and the DtrH and the Chronicler on the other hand, who include him formulaically in the line of the kings “who did evil in the eyes of the Lord.”

While Matthew’s purpose was not primarily to present an apologetic for his people, the Jews, to the Roman Emperor, he may well have made use of an understanding of Jehoiachin that stemmed from the Shaphanide interpreters of Jeremiah rather than the DtrH and the Chronicler. This is corroborated by the fact that Matthew, unlike the
Chronicler, transmits the line of legal descent from Jehoiachin to Zerubbabel through Shealtiel, while the Chronicler traces it through Pedaiah (1 Chronicles 3:16-19).

The larger task of incorporating the Jeremianic prophetic framing of Jehoiachin, applying it to Jesus, and constructing an apologetic that would set the Jewish king on the world stage, such as we see at the end of Jeremiah 52 with Jehoiachin fell to another New Testament document, The Acts of the Apostles. However, there had been several permutations of the ideas of kingship as it passed from Babylonian through the Persian and Hellenistic empires before the early Jesus-followers attempted to address the Roman empire with renewed Davidic claims.\(^\text{35}\)

**From Babylon to Rome: Persian and Hellenistic Kingship**

As much as scholars admire Luke’s literary artistry, few appear to have worked on Luke’s particular hermeneutic of triangulating the two significant bases of authority for the church (the Septuagint and the apostles) and their Greco-Roman context, positioning Jesus in similar ways to the way the Shaphanide scribes positioned Jehoiachin at the end of Jeremiah. This is especially important for our purposes, given the intent of Jeremiah 52 to place the Jewish king, Jehoiachin, on the world stage as above all other kings, second only to the world emperor, Evil-Merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar. A similar hermeneutical move appears in Acts, although under another emperor, Caesar.

\(^{35}\) Cyrus, king of Persia, was the first king to receive the designation “the Lord’s messiah” in Isa. 45:1: המישָׁאֵל הַיָּהָה לִמְשִׁיחוֹ יְהוָה קֹלָּה וְאָמַר. Nebuchadnezzar received the title “my servant” בְּֽנֵבְעָדָֽה נַעֲנָה לִשֵּׁם הָאָדָם in Jeremiah 25:9.
This interpretive move resonates with broad parallels in other ancient Near Eastern views of kingship.36

To get a fuller sense of the cultural context into which Luke was writing, we need to look at its predecessor, the Hellenistic kings and their portrayal in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. The *Cyropaedia* includes elements of what later interpreters identified as the “romance novel” (a form also used in the canonical and apocryphal Acts).37 More importantly, the *Cyropaedia* dramatically portrays princely behavior, and served as a model for future generations of kings.38 This model dominated the Eastern Mediterranean for three centuries after Alexander and bears at least some relationship to the behavior of real kings in the Hellenistic world.39 Non-Greeks could worship the Hellenistic kings in non-Greek contexts, thus creating the potential for a universal kingship. The ideal king should be virtuous and godlike and the idea of the Hellenistic kingship eventually included divinity as well.40

Although Rome eventually incorporated these ideas into their view of kingship as well, Rome initially rejected the idea of the divinity of kings. Caesar at first made a

36 Lucass, *The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity*, chap. 3 “Kingship in the Ancient near East.”


38 Ibid.


public show of denying the title of king when the crowds offered it to him.\textsuperscript{41} Yet, expanding on the idea in the \textit{Cyropaedia} that the ruler’s personal piety served as a means of political control, Rome soon came to see that religious worship in general provided a means of political control.\textsuperscript{42} Rome had learned well from the mistakes of Ptolemaic Egypt and the successes of the Seleucid Empire.\textsuperscript{43} The emperor cults integrated the emperor into the mental world of the local provinces.\textsuperscript{44} Rome eventually came to view these cults as advantageous and took an active lead in organizing and promoting them, particularly in the West, even though it did not have much control over their functions.\textsuperscript{45} The Roman imperial cult, a social and religious phenomenon, touched the lives and the worldview of Jews and Christians who lived within it.\textsuperscript{46} Although, as we have noted, the idea of the imperial cult encountered resistance, it did not take a great amount of time before it became more commonly accepted.\textsuperscript{47} This raises a potential problem for Luke,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Farber, “The Cyropaedia and Hellenistic Kingship,” 501–502.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Ibid. This sort of problem may have been behind the difficulties at Corinth as well. Nancy Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E to 100 C.E.,” in \textit{Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches}, ed. Daniel N Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen, Harvard Theological Studies 53 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Theological Studies, Harvard Divinity School, 2005), 163.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Makrides, \textit{Hellenic Temples and Christian Churches}, 29.
\end{itemize}
who wants to use kingship, as it has progressed through successive phases of Babylonian,
Persian and Hellenistic views into the Roman empire, to connect to a Greco-Roman
audience. The Christian message of Jesus’ kingship, if cast in Greco-Roman terms, could
simply be co-opted by the Romans into one of their imperial cults. A precedent for this
had already occurred in the Hellenizing influence on the Hasmonean kingship and in
Herod’s grandiose rebuilding of the Jews’ temple.48 Some now were wary of how Roman
rulers might use religion for supralocal organization and ideology, as they did with all the
imperial cults.49 In fact, these fears were justified. It would turn out that just as the
Hellenistic kings would exceed the Cyropaedia in appropriating titles that many
construed as divine. Nor could the Caesars resist the titles normally associated with deity
and kingship in the East, and eventually appropriated them for themselves.50 Thus, the
interpretive models used for the return of a Jewish king on the world stage looked back
through the Hellenistic and Persian kingships to the last time a Davidide had appeared on
the world stage.

48 For discussion of the specific relation of the Jewish kingship to Rome, especially after the
Hasmoneans, see Per Bilde et al., eds., “Introduction,” in Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship, Studies in
Hellenistic Civilization 7 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 9, 10. Lee I Levine, Judaism and
Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence? (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 52. On
the other hand, this is not always inimical to Jewish identity. Erich S. Gruen, “Hellenistic Kingship:
Puzzles, Problems, and Possibilities,” in Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship, ed. Per Bilde et al., Studies in
Hellenistic Civilization 7 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 124. Levine, Judaism and Hellenism in
Antiquity, 42–43.

49 Friesen, Twice Neokoros, 4.

Ibid., 75. Smith, Hellenistic Royal Portraits, 19.
Acts: Another Jewish King on the Stage of World Empire?

Luke-Acts was a single work, only separated late in the canonical process by the insertion of the Gospel of John between them. The Gospel of Luke does not include Jehoiachin in its genealogy, but chooses a different line altogether, probably more for theological purposes than historical. 51 Perhaps not surprisingly, this gospel focuses less on claims of kingship then does Matthew. Rather, the argument for the kingship of Jesus appears in the second part of the work, The Acts of the Apostles, in a series of three set speeches from Peter, James and Paul, three of the most important and influential names in the early church. 52 Our interest will focus on the last set speech by James, where he uses Jeremiah and Amos to make his claims about the kingship of Jesus.

Of particular interest for our purposes is to understand to what extent Acts’ author uses prophetic framing devices, such as we find in the prophetic portrayal of Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22 and 52. If we can find a literary strategy resembling that of the Shaphanides, it will be further evidence of their ability to construct a literary strategy for a new world order that they believe would stand the test of time and which later interpreters could use as the basis for their arguments. In this respect, the arguments of two authors are significant.

Troy Troftgruben notes the importance of open-ended endings in ancient literature and such use in the book of Acts. He sees the ending of the book of Acts as being a test:


will human beings resist God’s mission? This seems to be at the heart of the polemics of exile between the Babylonian exiles and those still in Jerusalem. The Shaphanide scribes have shaped Jeremiah’s legacy in such a way as to put the king of Israel in his place of glory, not in Jerusalem, but in Babylon. However, relying mainly on 1-4 Kings as his parallel, he sees no particular importance in Jeremiah’s treatment of Jehoiachin. However, while Troftgruben believes that the ending of the DtrH (and, for him, by extension, Jeremiah 52) is irrelevant to the book of Acts, his argument would improve was he to see the differences between the end of the DtrH and Jeremiah’s portrayal of Jehoiachin. I agree with his assessment as far as it goes concerning the endings of the two books. However, the development of the kingship of Jesus by Acts’ author’s use of the prophets strongly parallels the Shaphanides’ literary strategy.

Ben Witherington has also noted the open-endedness of both Acts and the end of the DtrH. Neither document includes the death of its main character. Further, both end with an important figure poised to take a significant new step in the *Heilsgeschichte* of the people of God. Witherington admits that the parallels are not exact, but clearly, in the final version of both documents, there seems to be some intent to leave the future open with some historical figure poised at an important juncture in the narrative. However, Witherington appears not have made use of parallels between the birth narrative of Jesus

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54 Ibid., 106, 108.

and Samuel at the beginning of Luke-Acts. This would further strengthen the case that Luke-Acts intended to write the history and Jesus and the NT church following the pattern of the DtrH, but with Jesus as the king.

Neither the DtrH nor the Chronicler has a positive view of the Davidic kingship. Only Jeremiah, with its eschatological open-endedness (the promise of a new life for Israel without a temple, ark or Mosaic covenant) is unique and provides a better framework for understanding how the writer of The Acts of the Apostles frames the speeches of the three primary apostles to make an argument for Jesus’ kingship. It derives from the biblical narrative, but frames it in such a way as to place the Jewish king on the world stage. This is similar to Jehoiachin who, despite the oracle against him in Jeremiah 22, appears above all other kings (except Evil-Merodach) at the end of both the LXX and the MT.

There is one further important parallel between Jeremiah and Acts. Deuteronomy, upon which Jeremiah is heavily dependent, makes note of the seven nations that Israel must put under the ban, a point rehearsed in the record of Paul’s speech in Acts 13:19. The context in Deuteronomy makes it clear that obedience to the Mosaic code as recorded in Deuteronomy provides the basis for this proscription against the seven nations. In contrast, Jeremiah includes eight nations, against which Israel was to have no place in bringing judgment. A possible exception is Jer. 49:2, although the Lord is the one who goes to battle. The NRSV identifies Israel as his weapon of war in Jer. 51:20-23, but this is doubtful. The more likely referent is Jeremiah himself, as in Jer. 1. Other than

56 Dr. Robert Seesengood, Albright College and regional SBL coordinator for New Testament, suggested this idea to me at the Mid-Atlantic Regional meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Baltimore, MD, March 14, 2013.
those places, Israel and Judah only appear in their humiliation, or seldom, as objects of mercy. Cf. Jer. 46:27, 38:13, 27, 49:1, 50:4, 17, 19-20, 50:33, 51:5, 19, 49). Further, in Jeremiah God now deals with both Israel and the other nations on an equal footing apart from the Deuteronomic code. This turn toward the nations finds a parallel at the conclusion of Acts. Indeed, the record of Paul’s ministry appears to reprise several important points of Jeremiah’s ministry among his own people, namely that he needs encouragement from God to speak the word of judgment against his own people, and receives a promise from God that he will be rescued from his own people, just as God promised Jeremiah. 57 We do not intend to develop a full-blown hermeneutic of Acts’ author’s use of the prophets in the mouths of the apostles, which would go well beyond the space we have allowed here. Rather, we want to see if Acts’ shaping of the prophets produces a view of Jesus’ kingship similar to the Shaphanides’ portrayal of Jehoiachin as the king of Israel who moves from abject humiliation and powerlessness to a position of glory and authority in world empire.

Style and Literary Strategy

Scholarship varies widely in its attempts to define Luke’s style of writing, from the pre-critical view that he presented straightforward history, to calling him a novelist

57 Jeremiah 1:5–8 (NRSV) “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.” Cf. Acts 18:9 (NRSV) One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; Acts 26:17 (NRSV) I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles (εθνη, nations)—to whom I am sending you
creating almost pure historical fiction, and other more moderating positions. Luke uses a significant type of writing within his overall work: action centered on speeches by significant actors in the history of the early church, either martyrs or apostles.

Luke seizes on the most important institution in the Hellenistic period (and Rome as well), the kingship, to make his claims about Jesus. He does not merely recite what the apostles said. Rather, he provides an interpretative summary of their words to create a literary framework, just as the Shaphanide scribes did for the oracles of Jeremiah. He fits an originally Jewish religious movement increasingly dominated by people from a non-Jewish background within Greco-Roman ideas of kingship. Thus, Luke triangulates his own interpretation of the Septuagint, the words of the apostles and Greco-Roman ideas of kingship to build a distinctive theology of Jesus’ universal, spiritual kingship out of its local Israelite base. Thus, Luke endeavors to cast the kingship of Jesus in a way that,


rooted in Jewish royal history, also will resonate with the ideas of kingship in a Greco-Roman audience unfamiliar with that history.61

*Jeremiah, Acts and the Son of David*

We have already noted the issues with the oracle against Jehoiachin and its function in the book of Jeremiah as a whole. In the end, most interpreters, including Jeremiah himself in the immediately following chapter, other biblical interpreters such as Haggai and Zerubbabel, and post-canonical Jewish and Christian exegetes agreed that some new path would need to be found to once again have a king over the people of Yahweh, probably though a reinterpreted messianic Davidide. Luke takes up this challenge in his genealogy. Perhaps following Jeremiah’s command to “record this man childless” (Jer. 24:30), Luke bypasses all of David’s offspring who succeeded him on the throne of Israel so that, theologically, for Luke the kingship of Israel passes directly from king David to Jesus in Luke 3.62 In fact, Luke makes it a point in his gospel preface to downplay the history of the biblical narrative, thus broadening its accessibility to a Gentile audience.63 Luke’s distinctive genealogy confirms this in ch. 3, which fits more with Greco-Roman models than Hebrew ones.64

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61 For discussion of how this worked in other Hellenistic writings, see Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament: History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, 1:34.


The advantage for Luke portraying the kingship of Jesus in this way is to provide proof that he is not trying to claim a typical genealogical succession to the throne as would be common for most kings. He does claim a genealogy, but by passing directly from David to Jesus, he makes it clear from the outset that Jesus’ kingship is an eschatological and spiritual kingship, and as such posed no threat to the emperor. He does not even record the slaughter of the innocents (as Matthew does) which could have created fear of a reactionary uprising against Caesar, who, like Herod, took a keen interest in any potential challengers to his throne. Since one can read Luke-Acts as a single story, this helps Luke set the stage in Acts for his literary framework for Jesus, son of David, son of Yahweh, and heir to the throne of Israel, in terms of a spiritual kingship understandable for his Greco-Roman audience. Thus, again, at least in one interpretation, the king of Israel appears on the world stage, with appropriate deference for the current world emperor, just as Jehoiachin did at the end of Jeremiah.

The first speech is in Acts 2. The second appears in Acts 13, as a combination of Peter’s Acts 2 sermon and Stephen's Acts 7 sermon. The author of Acts clearly shapes

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65 This appears in its development in medieval Judaism as well. Abraham Melamed, The Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Thought, SUNY Series in Jewish Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 44.

66 The first set speech is in Acts 2:29-31, where Acts records a summary of Peter’s speech. Undoubtedly, we can assume that this brief comment, taking up only three verses, summarizes Peter’s teaching and is not a verbatim account. However, in summarizing, and in a few textual emendations made to the Septuagint quotes that bracket it, Luke shows how he uses it to shape and frame Jesus’ kingship. First, in 2:17, where the Septuagint (Joel 3:1 LXX = Joel 2:28 MT) reads καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα (“and it will come to be after these things...”), Luke changes the text to read καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις (“And it will come to be in the last days...”). Thus, he sets the stage for Peter’s sermon to reflect an eschatological
cast firmly built on the older prophetic traditions, and reflected in the eschatological cast of the OAN in Jeremiah. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5:49. In other words, Jesus’ kingship is an eschatological kingship, not one that Roman rulers should perceive as a direct threat to Rome. In contrast, the quotation in v. 25 from Psalm 15:8-11 and the use of Septuagint Psalm 109:1 in 33-34 is exact, helping buttress the immediacy of Luke’s direct application of the title “son of David” to Jesus without any intermediary kings. Ibid., 5:51, 52. In a similar way, the Shaphanide editors of Jeremiah’s works changed the end of the DtrH to include a census that would demonstrate for both Jews and Gentiles the superiority of the Babylonian rule for the people of Israel, as compared to their experience under the Davidic monarchy. Thus, Luke has both appealed to the Septuagint and interpreted it for his audience in such a way as to promote his view of Jesus as the immediate son of David and a universal, eschatological king, but who does not present a direct threat to Rome. It is important to note here that we are not looking primarily at Acts 2 as a hermeneutical method or correlation of literary genres here (which are quite different in Acts 2 and Jeremiah 52). Acts works in reverse from Jeremiah 52, placing the goal of their portrayal of Jesus’ kingship at the beginning of their framework, while the Shaphanides placed it at the end. We are looking for editorial shaping of prophetic works to produce a specific goal: a particular view of Israelite kingship permanently in the center of the empire, in this case the Roman empire, in Jehoiachin’s case, the Babylonian empire. In the brief summary recorded by Luke, Luke opens Peter speech with Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴσον εἰπεῖν μετὰ παρρησίας (“Men! Brothers! Being authorized to say with frankness...”). It begins with a formulaic style of address to the Jewish religious leadership: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, (“Men, brothers!”). This phrase does not appear in the Septuagint and only appears in the New Testament in the book of Acts. Everywhere it appears it functions as the greeting given by someone about to make an address, or defense, to the religious leaders of the Jews. The point is that Peter makes the claim of Jesus’ being the son of David to the Jewish religious leaders. It is not a legitimating claim directed against Rome. Moreover, the bold, or frank, claim of authority only results in conversion to a new religious sect, not something that would particularly strike fear into the heart of the Roman emperor who was accustomed to such things happening throughout his empire. 66 In his explanation of the Septuagint passages placed here by Luke, Luke records Peter’s speech claiming that David was speaking as a prophet (not as a king) and that he looked forward to resurrection (not a descendant that would revive his kingdom militarily). Of course, it was common in Jewish exegesis to claim that many of their forbears were prophets, but it is clear that Luke wants any idea of military kingship, such as that associated with David, to remain in the background. Luke records Peter making the claim first in a midrashic style, then a pesher explanation of the Septuagint texts, all of which makes the claim of authority rest upon the Jewish leaders. He does not portray a successor to the Caesars. “The application of Pss 16:8–11 and 110:1 to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus in Acts 2:25–36. While a midrashic understanding has brought the two passages together, it is a pesher understanding that evokes such an introduction as “David said concerning him” (Δαωὶδ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν) and applies the passages directly to Jesus.” Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed., CD-ROM (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 84. Luke designs everything in Peter’s portrayal of the Septuagint and his speech to reinforce the view that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the son of David and a universal king, but an eschatological king with a spiritual kingdom who does not pose any direct threat to Rome. One can compare the position of Jehoiachin as a submissive king to Babylon raised to honor because of his non-threatening stance toward the world empire. “Noting Luke’s positive view of gentiles and in particular of Roman officials, some have suggested that Luke wrote an apology for the Christian movement as a whole (Cadbury 1927: 306–16; Easton 1936). By observing the political harmlessness of the movement, magistrates might be convinced to grant Christians the same freedom enjoyed by “other Jews.” In this light, Luke’s portrayal of Christianity as rooted in Judaism makes a critical political point. The proconsul Gallio’s decision in Acts 18:14–15 is therefore exemplary: in matters of dispute among “Jews,” magistrates need not meddle (Conzelmann 1961: 137–44). Luke’s positive outlook on the empire has been interpreted in the other direction: Luke writes an apology for the empire, encouraging among the politically restive of his fellow Christians a non-apocalyptic, politically cooperative attitude (Walasky 1983).” Luke Timothy Johnson, “Luke-Acts, Book Of,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 407. Nevertheless, Acts’ Greco-Roman audience would recognize the claims to kingship. Following in the style of Caesar, who at first refused and then only grudgingly accepted the title of king, Jesus at first refuses such titles in the gospel of Luke and only accepts it right before his death at
the end of the travel narrative in Luke 19:37. Although (and in the New Testament writers, because) he died ignominiously, Jesus was both virtuous and divine, which fit with the later Hellenistic view of the ideal king. Smith, Hellenistic Royal Portraits, 49. Although atypical and eschatological, he did have a royal genealogy. Tessa Rajak, The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 170. Finally, the quotations from the messianic Psalms serve as both a factual and conceptual bridge to the next apostolic speech. Cf. “… (Ac. 2:29f). We find the same exposition of the same section of the Psalm in Paul’s speech in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Ac. 13:35f). In this case it is introduced by some words from Is. 55:3: δοσιμόνυ τὰ ὅσια Δαυὶδ τὰ πιστά (Ac. 13:34: “I will give you the sure mercies of David,” i.e., the fulfillment of the prophecy given to David in the death and resurrection of Christ.”) Barth, The Doctrine of God, Part 2, 2:388.  

67 The next speech is in Acts 13:36-39, where Acts records a summary of Paul’s speech in Antioch of Pisidia. In v. 34, the text records Paul recounting the βραχίονος ὑψηλοῦ (“uplifted arm”) of God, normally used in the Septuagint to refer to military victories of Israel over its enemies. Yet here, it uses it only in reference to Moses, and the story of Israel’s flight from Egypt by this time is ancient history for the Romans. Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 5:231. If there is any “military” cast to these speeches, it is a purely spiritual warfare, although that also could resonate with Xenophon’s portrayals. Nadon, Xenophon’s Prince, 144. Luke keeps this sort of military language out of Paul’s speech about Jesus entirely. In fact, Luke records Paul using no language related to the military victories of Israel, probably to preclude any possible accusations of Christian notions of revolt against the Romans as in the Maccabean period. Paul combines elements of Peter’s sermon and Stephen’s sermon in a manner that would have been recognizable to most synagogue-goers. He joins together 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7 (Cf. also 1 Samuel 13:14, Deuteronomy 4:25–46.) by using the rabbinic interpretation called gezerah shawah (analogy); i.e. since they both record God speaking of “my son”, by analogy they could be put together. Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period, 81. This interpretation parallels that of the Qumran manuscripts, testifying to the fact that others would have perceived Paul’s speech as not particularly novel or unusual, except his identification of Jesus of Nazareth who had died as the Messiah. The messianic identification appeared already firmly established in Luke 4. Robert L Brawley, Luke—Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series no. 33 (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987), 12–13. In fact, this passage has one of the strongest statements of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah (Christ). Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Acts 13:16. According to Luke’s interpretation of Paul, Paul makes a deliberate contrast between David and Jesus, again using a rabbinic principle of arguing from the lesser to greater. He says that David served God’s purposes in his own (ἰδία, “one’s own, distinct”) generation, possibly meaning to compare David’s effectiveness with Jesus whom Paul proclaimed rose from the dead and was alive, and thus could serve all generations. While the method of interpretation would have been familiar, its claim was quite new and strong. Even John Chrysostom notes this. John Chrysostom, “Homily XXIX,” in Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. XI, CD-ROM, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 183. What Paul has said may already have been familiar to at least some in attendance. Those who were familiar with Peter’s and Stephen’s sermons would have recognized what Paul was saying, and those who had not heard the sermons, or the reports about them, may well have recognized his rabbinic method of interpretation. Further, the idea that Jesus rose from the dead is not Paul’s invention, and likely belonged to one of the early Christian creeds. James D. G. Dunn, “Christology (NT),” ed. David Noel Freedman, Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 982. Paul even uses the standard phrase already noted in chapter 2 to begin an authoritative or defense speech to Jewish leaders: “Men, brothers!” (“Ἄνδρες ἄδελφοι, andres, adelfoi). So also, the King Collection argues from the lesser to the greater to set the stage for the appearance of the “Branch” of David after the oracle against Jehoiachin and the “shepherds” in 22:24-23:4. Here again, Acts’ literary strategy is the important consideration. In the Corinthian and Galatian correspondence, Paul rarely uses “fulfillment” language, as it would likely not have made much sense to its largely Gentile audience. In this passage, however, Luke records Paul using a deliberate fulfillment theme that Longenecker believes reflects a historical continuity and knowledge of the Old Testament that presupposes a Jewish audience. Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period, 114. However, it seems more likely that Luke is
them to create a carefully nuanced view of the kingship of Jesus that includes numerous parallels to the final version of Jeremiah’s portrait of Jehoiachin.68

bringing Israelite history to the world stage, as if to say that the history of the Jews is the history of all Jesus-followers, whether Jew or Gentile. This, of course, is a position Paul has already staked out in his earliest correspondence to the Corinthians. The point for Luke’s framework for Jesus’ universal kingship is that he records Paul directing the claims of the king of Israel to both a Jewish and a non-Jewish audience, again based on the resurrection and in an eschatological setting. The impact on Roman rulers was negligible, for whom such claims about a man they had put to death posed no particular threat. Further, paralleling Luke’s framing of Peter’s speech in chapter 2, this speech more than ever makes the explicit connection with Davidic messianism and links Jesus directly to David as his immediate son. Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Acts 13:16. Yet, once again, the result of this authoritative, kingly power wielded by Jesus resinded and replaced Moses’ authority, not Caesar’s, and was a proclamation of radical grace for Jews and Gentiles, not a call to insurrection. “Acts makes the universal and absolute claim that all, both Jews and gentiles, are to be ‘saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus’ (Acts 15:11).” Gerald G. O’Collins, “Salvation,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 911. Just as the oracle against Jehoiachin announced the end of Yahweh’s acting as a result of covenant-obedience or non-covenant-obedience, thus relegating the role of Moses to a lower status in the future of Israel, so than author of Acts follows in this literary strategy. Thus, even in the midst of fiery speech from a well-known fiery speaker, Acts’ author frames the proclamation of the universal kingship of Jesus in a way that will not directly conflict with Caesar. Acts shows us Paul presenting Jesus as both the ethically ideal man, and divine in his resurrection, both essential attributes of the idealized later Hellenistic kings. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 49. As far as Roman rulers may have been concerned, Jesus-followers could worship in what they would have perceived as a merely civic cult that posed no threat to the imperial cult. Ibid., 19. Further, Luke does not here record Jesus taking the name of king for himself, but he receives the appellation from someone else, just as Caesar did. Rawson, “Caesar’s Heritage,” 148. He possessed a royal genealogy, and in addition to David took the royal throne of Moses, understood as the first king in some Jewish traditions. Rajak, The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome, 164, 170. A Jewish reaction against this may also be behind the fact in later medieval Jewish philosophy the king-Messiah could not take a place higher than Moses could. Melamed, *The Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Thought*, 44. The egalitarianism of Jew and Gentile united only by radical grace paralleled the egalitarianism and conviviality of the Hellenistic banqueting tables of the kings. Oswyn Murray, “Hellenistic Royal Symposia,” in *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, ed. Per Bilde et al., *Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 7* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 26. Like those successful kings, Luke portrays Jesus as able to seize and keep power, and though it was a spiritual power in the resurrection from the dead, it is nevertheless a real power. Bilde et al., “Introduction,” 11. On the other hand, it is a kingship claim recognizable to a Greco-Roman audience, just as it was possible for Jehoiachin to still be considered as king of Israel, and even be raised above the other kings, and yet without any threat to Babylon. This rebuilding, then, of the eschatological royal lineage of David in a way that connects with his Greco-Roman audience is the connecting theme to the speech of James in Acts 15.

68 "Polybius, Dionysius, and Luke share a basic rhetorical purpose -- to include speeches in their narratives that caused the events they narrate, so that their readers know not only what happened, but why, and who persuaded or failed to persuade their audiences to make decisions that led to acts that were successful or disastrous." Balch, “Ἀκριβως... γραψαι (Luke 1:3): To Write the Full History of God’s Receiving All Nations,” 239. Holladay, “Acts and the Fragments of Hellenistic Jewish Historians,” 182. William S. Kurz, “Promise and Fulfillment in Hellenistic Jewish Narratives and in Luke and Acts,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim Upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner, Luke the Interpreter of Israel v. 1 (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1999), 150. "In terms of the object of Luke and Acts I believe there is general consensus that these works can be called ‘legitimating narrative.’ … the claim of the Jesus movement to the Israelite heritage.” Richard Pervo, “Israel’s Heritage and Claims 175
The third set speech, which concerns us here, is a summary of James’s interpretation of passages from Jeremiah and Amos in Acts 15:15-19. Here the attention focuses on Amos, a prophet whose ministry undoubtedly influenced Jeremiah.69 Here

Upon the Genre(s) of Luke and Acts: The Problems of a History,” in Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim Upon Israel’s Legacy, ed. David P. Moessner, Luke the Interpreter of Israel v. 1 (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1999), 136. “Each text in its position reveals that, in Luke’s opinion, it was the speeches of the apostles and Paul that directed the development of early Christianity at the turning points of its history.... several observations show clearly that the Lukan conception of the mission speeches as factors determining the course of history is identical with that of Dionysius. These observations are Dionysius’s reasoning concerning the correct way to report the end of the Peloponnesian War (11.1.2-3), the justification he offers for his extensive portrayal of the early republican class wars (7.66), his astonishment and displeasure concerning those historians who fail to report speeches in the way he considers appropriate (7.66.3-4), and finally his relevant criticism of Thucydid (De Thuc. 14; 17)...

69 The quotation Luke places in the mouth of James from the Septuagint comprises nearly the entirety of James’ speech, and it diverges significantly from the Hebrew Masoretic text. The quotation is from Amos 9:11, and there are important relationships between Amos and Jeremiah. Amos also had an important prophecy against a king (Jeroboam) which did not come true. Both had a contentious relationship with the kings of Israel. Both combined judgment discourse against the kings with the promise of a completely new lineage for David and the house of Israel. Jeremiah borrows from Amos an important double rhetorical question form that he uses especially in his theological and covenantal poetry. Moreover, Jeremiah's general dependence on Amos and other prophets is well known. Cf. Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel, 20, 91; Christopher R. Seitz, Zion’s Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36-39 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 105; Brueggemann, “Jeremiah’s Use of Rhetorical Questions,” 358; Hahn, “Χριστός,” 479–480. The argument that Luke makes by means of James and the Septuagint appears to depend on the Septuagint reading, not the Hebrew text, although some dispute this. The two versions with translation appear here.

| Amos 9:11 ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἀκέινη ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυίδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ ἀνακατοποιήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω καὶ ἀνακατοποιήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἱ ἡμείραι τοῦ αἰῶνος. | Amos 9:11 בְּתָלְתָּהְו יִשָּׁעַ שַׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה יִשְׁתַּחַר כְּרַג יְהוָה אֲלֵיהּ יָשַׁעַ יִשָּׁרְאֵל בְּתָלְתָּהְו יִשָּׁעַ שַׁם יִשָּׁרְאֵל יְהוָה יִשְׁתַּחַר כְּרַג יְהוָה אֲלֵיהּ יָשַּׁעַ יִשָּׁרְאֵל

In those days, I will raise up the booth of David, which fell, and I will build its cracks and its ruins I will raise up, and I will build it according to the everlasting days.

In that day I will raise up the tent of David which has fallen and I will rebuild those things of it which had fallen, and those things which had been dug down I will raise up and I will rebuild it just as the days of the age…
Amos, in an eschatological interpretation, appears to conflate the journey of Israel under Moses through the wilderness and the subsequent Festival of Booths with David. In addition, the beginning of v. 12 (in Amos) seems to refer to a revival of the military might of Israel under a renewed kingship from the Davidic line, a line that Luke has James excise. Here, the Septuagint translation seems more amenable to Luke’s purpose of establishing a spiritual, eschatological kingship: ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυιδ (“... I will raise up the tent of David...”), a phrase typically thought to refer to a revived kingly lineage of David, or a revived kingdom. In Acts, it refers to the ekklesia of Jesus-believing Jews and Gentiles from every nation. The context here would seem to refer

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70 Frank Moore Cross’s famous suggestion that the “tent/tabernacle of David” may have been the model upon which the Temple of Solomon in the Mosaic tabernacle were built is beyond the scope of this paper. Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 84–95. It is a view not without its critics. William M. Schniedewind, “Review of ‘Cross, Frank Moore, From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel,’ (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998.),” *Review of Biblical Literature* 2000 (May 25, 2000). Clearly, by this time, and probably even in Amos’s time as well, David’s tent has achieved an eschatological meaning. For the argument that this stems from the time of the composition of the book of Jeremiah, cf. Stipp, “Zedekiah in the Book of Jeremiah,” 644, n. 36.

this to Jesus as the kingly lineage of David, because of the authority that he has to undo the Mosaic legislation regarding circumcision, announced by James.72

First Luke carefully eliminates from the Septuagint passage the beginning of Amos 9:12, the promise to “…possess the remnants of Edom…” and focuses all the attention on applying Amos’s prophecy to Jesus’ universal kingship. Even more importantly, for our purposes, Luke changes the Septuagint’s final stich from LXX Amos 9:11 (ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτήν, “… I will rebuild it…” ) to read ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν (“... I will set it upright/straight...”).73 Whenever ἀνορθόω appears in the Septuagint in relation to David, it always appears in relation to the language of the eternal covenant given to David.74 Acts’ author records James taking the Septuagint in a purely proleptic fashion, so that God fulfilled the promise of an eternal kingship to David directly and immediately in Jesus, not Solomon and those who followed him in both northern and southern kingdoms, consistent with the genealogy given in his gospel. Further, by using James to invoke this interpretation of the Septuagint, he lends apostolic authority to his literary framework.75


73 Of course, it is entirely possible that Luke/James is simply quoting from a different version of the Septuagint not available to us. The words themselves are not markedly different in meaning. Rather, the connection to the eternal promise to David is significant, and this point stands whether it is a different version of the Septuagint or a deliberate change by Luke/James.

74 2 Sam 5:16, 19; 1 Chr 16:8, 10, 20; 20:1.

75 This comes even as James and the Jerusalem church begin to recede from the narrative of Acts and Paul begins to come to the forefront, after his apostolic validation on a number of levels. Thomas E. Phillips, Paul, His Letters, and Acts, Library of Pauline Studies (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 137. Thus, once again Luke displays his skill as a hermeneutician in framing the twin authority bases of the Septuagint and apostolic teaching to construct a message designed to resonate with conceptions of Greco-Roman kingship. Once again he makes the genealogical claim of Jesus as the immediate son of David, especially in his use of ἀνορθόω as a verbal link to the eternal promises of David in the Septuagint.
At the heart of the speeches Luke ascribes to Peter, Paul and James, lays the witness to the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet he takes care to frame each of these speeches and the Septuagint in ways that will resonate with notions of Hellenistic and Greco-Roman kingship during his time. In so doing, he has taken the God of a small nation in Palestine, a nation that suffered successive depredations by several world empires, and elevated that god, in his proclamation of the risen Jesus, to be the world king. It was a move originated by the Shaphanide editors of Jeremiah in their construction of Jehoiachin and reflected in their construal of the end of the Deuteronomistic History in Jer. 52. In this sense, Jeremiah’s portrayal of Jehoiachin and renderings of the covenant promises to David in 2Sam 5:16, 19; 1Chr 16:8, 10, 20; 20:1. Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome*, 170. Luke has carefully removed from the Septuagint any texts that could be associated with attempts to regain the military glories of Israel’s history. In accordance with the practice of Hellenistic kings, Jesus of Nazareth and his Jewish context appear literally in a form suitable to those of another culture, Jesus appears as both ethical and divine and he was a king whom his followers worshiped as divine. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 19, 49. Luke records Jesus as one who receives the title of king from the prophets, not from himself. Rawson, “Caesar’s Heritage,” 148. Yet He exercises his kingly authority in bringing people from every nation to acknowledge the God of Israel as their own. Kim, “Kingdom of God,” 1.3. This establishes again both the universal nature of Jesus’ kingship and its eschatological cast which was of no direct threat to Rome. One can see glimmers of such a move with Jehoiachin, but more clearly in another number 2 to the Babylonian emperor, Daniel. The Roman Caesars had inherited from their Hellenistic forebears an appreciation for religion as a means of social control. They probably would have looked at this particular kind of “kingship” as something potentially beneficial to the empire, much as the new version of Israelite “kingship” under Jehoiachin at the end of Jer. 52 proved beneficial to the imperial policies of Evil-Merodach. To obviate this potential threat of incorporation into a merely civic imperial cult, Luke has James raise the universalism of the Amos passage to be its central point. Thus for the third time, now, Luke has managed to create a view of kingship with its roots in the Septuagint and apostolic teaching, which resonates with many ideas of kingship in the Greco-Roman world (including those inherited from the Hellenistic kings), and which precludes any accusation of military insurrection or possibility of being co-opted by the emperor cults. While scholars debate how historically reliable Luke’s accounts are and whether he writes as a novelist, a biographer or as a producer of “legitimating narrative,” or travelogues or something else, understanding Acts also requires greater emphasis on how Luke triangulates three hermeneutical focal points: the Septuagint, apostolic teaching and his Greco-Roman audience’s notion of kingship, their most significant institution.

Acts’ portrayal of the spiritual kingship of Jesus parallels the stories of Joseph, Daniel and Esther.

This is not to argue that the Shaphanides “predicted” the spiritual kingship of Jesus, or that Acts “fulfills” their hermeneutical construction. It is simply to argue that there are significant resonances between the two. As Fishbane observes:

“Is it possible that the origins of the Jewish exegetical tradition are native and ancient, that they developed diversely in ancient Israel, in many centres and many times, and that these many tributaries met in the exile and its aftermath to set a new stage for biblical culture which was redirected, rationalized, and systematized in the lively environment of the Graeco-Roman world? To ask the question this way is almost to answer it.” (author’s emphasis)

Yet Luke has done so in such a way as not to antagonize or threaten the current Roman rulers. As Roman rulers began more and more to accept the titles of divinity that their Eastern forebears had, the titles which the early Christian movement (including Luke) has already given Jesus (Θεος, Κυριος, Σωτηρ, “God, Lord, Savior”) will become problematic. Kim, “Kingdom of God,” sec. 1.3, 1.6. Yet Luke created conceptual space for Christians to deny that they ever intended to antagonize Rome, as Paul does repeatedly in his defense speech is in chapter 21-28. Fred Veltman, “The Defense Speeches in Acts,” in Luke-Acts, New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar, ed. Charles H. Talbert (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co, 1983), 243–256. Dean Philip Bechard, “The Disputed Case Against Paul: a Redaction-Critical Analysis of Acts 21:27-22:29,” Catholic Biblical Quarterly 65, no. 2 (April 2003): 246–250. By pointing to the early practice of Caesar in refusing such titles of kingship, they could point out the reality that everyone knew: that while the empire gave divine names to its rulers sometimes, everyone knew they were mere mortals, and for such rulers an eschatological, spiritual kingship would have no direct threat. Smith, Hellenistic Royal Portraits, 31. In so doing, Luke has created a narrative structure which is not only legitimating, but is practically useful for Christians struggling to establish their distinctive identity in the midst of increasing pressure from other versions of the Jesus story on the one hand, and increasing pressure from Roman rulers on the other. Later manifestations of the spiritual kingship of Jesus appear in devotional literature. Cf. Limberis, Divine Heiress, 152, 157, 158. In so doing, he established a pattern of creating authoritative written material as a basis for church legitimacy and authority based on his interpretive use of the Old Testament Septuagint and his interpretations of apostolic teaching. Luke knew his authority bases and his audience well and created a narrative to sustain a movement that against all the odds resisted every attempt at domestication into local civic imperial cults and put the God of Israel, proclaimed through the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as God’s vice-regent and universal, eschatological king, firmly on the world stage. The fact that this tack did not ultimately succeed in procuring the favor of the Empire was due to increasing imperial insistence on participation in the emperor cult, not because of the antagonism of Christians. Koester, Introduction to the New Testament: History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age, 1:312; Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament: History and Literature of Early Christianity, vol. 2, 2nd ed (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 339. Indeed, this reached its height in the conflict between Julian and Gregory of Nyssa. Limberis, “ ‘Religion’ as the Cipher for Identity,” 377. It was a conflict the empire would eventually lose in Julian’s “…unsatisfying and strained…” “…efforts to unite Homeric myth and Neoplatonism…” Ibid., 380. For a further discussion of how this conflict played out at the end of the Roman Empire, see Limberis, Divine Heiress, 7–29.
Although it would be difficult to argue direct dependence upon Jeremiah, Luke’s literary strategy for the history of Israel in relation to its Greco-Roman audience parallels the Shaphanide perspective on Israel’s history as reflected in their editing of the book of Jeremiah. It mirrors the prophetic framing of Jeremiah, just as we find Jehoiachin, who inexplicably escaped the seemingly impregnable oracle of Jer. 22:24-30 and appears as a king above kings, yet still submissive to the world emperor, at the end of Jeremiah 52. Like the Shaphanides, Acts identifies that king with a definite historical figure, rather than an eschatological one.

**Israelite Kingship at Qumran**

The Qumran community had a unique view of a revived Davidic kingship centered on a future, yet unknown, messiah. Sometimes speaking in the singular, sometimes in the plural, they envisaged a messianic figure who was royal, Davidic, triumphant and who bore the title, among others, of the ‘Branch of David’. Yet, of the available Qumran scrolls, none of them mentions Jehoiachin. Nevertheless, discussion of the kingship in Israel occurs at crucial points, and it seems clear that the Qumran community held to a different view of the end of the DtrH, culminating in Zedekiah, than the Shaphanide editors of Jeremiah. They mark the beginning of the exile with the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah, rather than the deportation of Jehoiachin as in the canonical MT and LXX. In fact, reminiscent of the way Josephus treats Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, Zedekiah even appears as, possibly, a mediator of a covenant

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78 Vermès, “Religious Ideas of the Community,” 86.

administered by Michael the archangel.\textsuperscript{80} This appears to contrast directly with the rabbinc portrayal of Jehoiachin as some sort of intermediary figure with the Lord.\textsuperscript{81}

Some depictions appear to depend more on Daniel and apocalyptic literature than Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{82} Another fragment describes the eschatological high priest as superior to all the kings of old, even reckoned with the gods. It is not certain they understand him also as the eschatological king, as the writer of Hebrews does.\textsuperscript{83} However, elsewhere, the kingship is explicitly addressed as a terrible reminder of misdeeds and the “end of the age,” a collection addressed to someone on par with king David, although it is not clear if this is the Teacher of Righteousness or an eschatological figure.\textsuperscript{84} There is a prayer of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81} As we noted in ch. 1 Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 19.6 provides a record of Jehoiachin giving the keys of the temple back to God because the Jews were unworthy of them. Others claimed he had brought the ark from the temple in Jerusalem to Babylon and erected a synagogue there. Jehoiachin in some rabbinc traditions was associated with great scholarship and teaching and exiling in exile. Feldman cites Ginzburg, \textit{Legends of the Jews}, 6:379, n 132, 380 n 134. for the following: Seder Olam 25, Sifre Deuteronomy 321, Tanhuma Noah 3, Gittin 88a, Sanhedrin 38a, Jerusalem Sanhedrin 1.19a, Nedarim 7, 40a, Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 11.7, Midrash Numbers Rabbah 11.3, Midrash Esther Rabbah introduction, Seder Olam 25, Tosefta Sheqalim 2.18, Yoma 53b.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Géza Vermès, ed., “MMT (Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah) – Some Observances of the Law (4Q394-91),” in \textit{The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English}, Rev. ed (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 228–229 (4Q398 11–13). For a discussion of the Temple Scroll’s union of king and priest, cf. Maier: “The Scroll contains characteristic additions which are more wide-ranging than the text of Dt. 17:14–20. In particular, they deal with the guard, the royal council, the queen, the division of spoil and the various ways of obtaining priestly oracles. Yadid sees in this a reflection of conditions under the Hasmoneans. However, if this were the case one would certainly expect a clear polemic against the union of the roles of High Priest and Prince (King) in one person. Yadid and M. Weinfeld (Shnaton 3, 214ff.) are inclined to see in this section a special ‘Tractate for the King’, the ‘Law’ that he had to read aloud at Sukkoth. On the other hand, Z. Falk (Sinai 83, 30ff.) sees in this only a statement of the power entrusted in the king whereby, on the basis of the text of the Torah, it is the oral tradition in particular that comes into play. D. Mendels (Shnaton 3, 245ff.; Aegyptus 59, 127ff.) compares the details that concern the king with the contents of the Letter of Aristeas and concludes that older Jewish ideas about the king adopted in the Letter of Aristeas with a
\end{itemize}

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Manasseh, allegedly written in his Assyrian jail cell, acknowledging his guilt and repenting of his sins, perhaps paralleling rabbinic descriptions of Jehoiachin’s alleged repentance in exile. The Temple Scroll contains a well-known summary of the Deuteronomic law of the king in which the renewal of the kingship is conditional based on royal obedience to the law of the king. The War Scroll, written to symbolize the eternal struggle between light and darkness, celebrates the victory of the renewed king as a fulfillment of prophecy in the destruction of the seven nations “of Belial,” probably a reference to the seven nations of Deut. 7:1. Here it seems that the combined king-priest figure is clearly eschatological and considered an heir of David. The Damascus Document denotes the age during which the Qumran community practiced as the time of the age of the wrath of God, quoting Hosea 3:4 as a reason for the hiatus in the

Hellenizing interpretation in which Ptolemaic conditions had a profound influence. Now Weinfeld (RB 87, 394ff.) has also claimed that there are Ptolemaic parallels in the Scroll (see on 57:5–11). In my opinion (as already expressed at 47.7ff.) this raises the question of dating. The explanation of this view of royal authority (whether in a ‘Tractate of the King’ or not) as a reaction to Hasmonan kingship is not convincing. In all cases, we could be dealing with material that was already generally available in the third century. The close relations of the Oniads and Tobiads to the Ptolemaic court could also have played a role when it came to actualizing the royal power described in Deuteronomy, perhaps in connection with the hopes for independence during the Diadoche feuds and the persistent disputes between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. On all this, see M. Delcor, Henoch 3, 47ff. His translation of 56.15ff., however, is scarcely tenable: ‘et il ne fera pas revenir le peuple d’Egypte en vue de la guerre …’ (49–50). See also Yadin I, 41).” Johann Maier, *The Temple Scroll: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, vol. 34, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 123–124.


Further, the identity of the “Branch of David” is an important consideration, appearing throughout the Qumran writings.\(^{88}\)

While the dependence of Qumran on Deuteronomy and Jeremiah is apparent, and there have been many debates over parallels between some aspects of the Qumran community and the writer of Hebrews, it appears that the Qumran community avoided any possible ties to Jehoiachin, preferring instead to attach any eschatological hopes connected with historical kings to Zedekiah. This may well have been because of differing allegiances that they held in the polemical debates after exile and may even represent a sort of last gasp of the homeland-group’s ideology before the destruction of the temple under Titus. It is unlikely that the Qumranites would have looked favorably on a king who had died in Babylon. They would have been more prone to see Zedekiah, who died in the homeland, as a martyr rather than Jehoiachin. For whatever reason, the Qumran community is the one group that seems to have deliberately avoided any use of Jehoiachin or the Shaphanide interpretive framework for him in interpreting their own community and the eschatological future.

**Possibilities for a Contemporary Literary-Critical Hermeneutic**

If the literary construction of the historical person of Jehoiachin at the hands of the Shaphanides was important for later generations, could contemporary writers also appropriate it in some way that retains faithfulness to the hermeneutical path begun by the Shaphanides in Babylon? We will investigate this by looking first at hermeneutical


\(^{88}\) Vermès, “Religious Ideas of the Community,” 68.
options developed by Hans Georg Gadamer, and then add speech-act theory, as
developed by Austin and Searle, its two main exponents.89

Gadamer observed the crisis of contemporary hermeneutical theory:

... hermeneutics is not a well-established, a well-ordered, a well-
understood, even a well-received science even in our own enlightened day.
The puzzle of hermeneutics has only deepened since its relatively explicit
modern beginnings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries... 90

It will be helpful to review some of the ground we went over in ch. 1. Since the
Enlightenment, hermeneutics has become a problem rather than a task. Hans Georg
Gadamer is just one of those who have noted the problematic character of hermeneutics
after the Enlightenment in the West.91 This has led to a number of attempts to get around

89 We confine ourselves here to these two possibilities. A full modern hermeneutic would need to
deal interact with the way a canon functions in its relationship to the state (see Ernst Kantorowicz, The
King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997),
60, 153. There, secularized canon law functions in much the same ways as the Deuteronomistic law of the
king [Deuteronomy 17:18–19 (NRSV) When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy
of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests. It shall remain with him and he shall read
in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, diligently observing all the
words of this law and these statutes...]). See also, Giambattista Vico, The New Science of Giambattista
Vico (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 87, 141. Cf. also his distinction between the
mythological and chronological canons, all the while using history to make theology, or vice versa. Ibid.,
207–208, 281–284.

90 Joseph Margolis, “Schleiermacher Among the Theorists of Language and Interpretation,,”

91 For others, see James L Kugel, “The Bible In the University,” in The Hebrew Bible and Its
Interpreters, ed. William Henry Propp, Baruch Halpern, and David Noel Freedman, Biblical and Judaic
Studies 1 (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 143–165; Jon D. Levenson, “Theological Consensus or
Historicist Evasion?,” in The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and
1993), 82–105; Jon D. Levenson, “Historical Criticism and the Fate of the Enlightenment Project,” in The
Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies, ed.
Jon D. Levenson, 1st ed. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 106–126; J. W Rogerson,
Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany, 1st Fortress Press ed
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 27. See the helpful discussion of all these works in Najman, Seconding
Sinai, 6n. That authority is a source of prejudices accords with the well-known principle of the
Enlightenment that Kant formulated: Have the courage to make use of your own understanding. Although
this distinction is certainly not limited to the role the prejudices play in understanding text, its chief
application is still in the sphere of hermeneutics, for Enlightenment critique drives primarily against the
religious tradition of Christianity – i.e., the Bible. Gadamer goes on: “… If verification – in whatever form form
the impasse of understanding the biblical text. One such method is simply to bracket all historical questions (as does Robert Carroll in the case of Jeremiah and Jehoiachin) and focus on the text itself, as in the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and Saussure. However, given the amount of historical research that has gone into the text of the Bible, such methods seem to involve some element of intentional self-deception. On the other hand, historical-critical research that discards the canon in favor of a reconstructed text is now

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— first determines truth (veritas), then the criterion for the determination of cognition is no longer its truth but its certainty...” Gadamer GW II, 48, cited in Schmidt, “Introduction: Between Certainty and Relativism,” 1. Historical-criticism was not limited to the Bible, certainly, as the early writings of Nietzsche demonstrate, but it had its most profound effect there because of the nature of the Bible as a canonical witness, and thus a source of authority, of which the Enlightenment was most mistrustful. In the pre-critical period, hermeneutics was entertained as simply a task in the life of the synagogue and church. After the Enlightenment, hermeneuticians – especially biblical hermeneuticians – problematized their task as the canonical, authoritative text of the Bible appeared before the judgment seat of human reason. It did not fare well. D. F. Strauss's work, The Life of Jesus, first published in 1835, initially scandalized those who were attempting to do biblical hermeneutics because of its radical denial of the divinity of Christ. Hans Frei explains it well: ... Criticism... centered around the question whether the meaning of human salvation, reconciliation, the realization of true human freedom, is necessarily connected with the occurrence of a specific and saving historical event, i.e. Jesus Christ... He [Strauss] effectively subverted what was agreed by all shades of theological opinion to be an indispensable tenet of conservative and mediating theology." Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, 224. Nevertheless, Strauss, to his credit, was consistent in working out his methodology, so that he could say in a much later work that the only responsible, honest thing to do in light of his biblical studies was to reject his faith in Jesus Christ! Williamson, The Longing for Myth in Germany, 252. This led Karl Marx to proclaim as early as 1844: “For Germany the criticism of religion is in the main complete, and criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism.” Marx and Engels, K. Marx and F. Engels on Religion, 41. This is not to say, of course, that everyone accepted the opinions of Strauss and Marx. Indeed, many did not, and the scorn heaped upon them was often caustic. Nevertheless, their critique could not ultimately disappear as long as the Enlightenment stance for reason and against prejudice remained in place. While many interpreters since then have realized that the Enlightenment starting place of the point of human reason is fraught with prejudice all of its own, biblical hermeneutics still often resembles more a morass of competing academic opinions based on historical reconstructions that seldom produce real consensus. Just as one case in point, for years scholars have accepted the distinction between the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline correspondence in the New Testament as proven beyond reasonable doubt. Yet computerized statistical analysis of the text, beginning in 1948 and continuing to the present, has tended to move in the direction of reducing any recognizable authorial style differences within the Pauline correspondence. A. Dean Forbes, “Statistical Research on the Bible,” Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996).

effectively dealing with a different text and suffers the damaging criticism that it can no longer legitimately claim to be doing biblical criticism.  

Speech-act theory, as originally developed by Austin in his William James lectures at Harvard, offers more promise for biblical hermeneutics in its original form, although under his disciple, John Searle, such concerns receive no attention. The theory is particularly useful to examine the categories of prophetic speech, hinted at in Austin, and in particular to investigate the problem of unfulfilled (“infelicitous” or “ineffectual”) prophetic oracles.

We will examine this problem in the oracle Jeremiah directs against Jehoiachin. While many significant foundational questions remain in play, speech-act theory and Gadamer’s hermeneutic help us make partial progress in biblical hermeneutics, so that it is not merely a problem, but something contemporary readers are capable of attempting.

93 Some have objected that the concept "canon" is a problem for biblical hermeneutics, as the Hebrew canon did not stabilize until the second or first century BCE-first century CE. However, this overstates the problem. A canon forms from writings that have already achieved authoritative status over time. It is not as if they suddenly became canonical at that time. Rather, they had now received formalized notice of a status that had already obtained informally. Something only receives formal authority, in this context, after it has already had extensive informal authority. Thus, the date of the final stabilization of the canon has little to do with establishing its authority, scope and meaning, which were already well established. Harry Y. Gamble, “Canon,” ed. David Noel Freedman, Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1996). “… Serious reservations can be held regarding the form of the critical Introduction [to the Bible since Eichhorn] as an adequate approach to the literature it seeks to illuminate… There always remains an enormous hiatus between the description of the critically reconstructed literature and the actual canonical text which has been received and used as authoritative Scripture by the community.” Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, 40. Thus, Childs does with the text of the Bible what Hans Frei does with its narratives in Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. Gadamer’s analysis differs from both Childs and Frei in that he attempts to situate the hermeneutical task in a global response to the problem of hermeneutics in general, even though he does spend a fair amount of time dealing with the problem of biblical hermeneutics. This is a very large task, and we should not be surprised if we find that he finds it easier to tear down than to build up.

94 This is undoubtedly due to Searle's theological biases, which declare that religious beliefs are almost certainly false, so that the task of biblical hermeneutics is not so much a problem as an unnecessary intrusion. John Searle, Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2010), 107.
We turn first to Gadamer for his critique of historical-critical hermeneutics, and then to speech-act theory as a way to potentially resolve the primary tension in the text, namely that one canonical book makes one of the centerpieces the apparently-unfulfilled word of the prophet, an “infelicitous” speech-act if there ever was one!\(^95\)

Perhaps more than any other, Gadamer has made it clear that the problem of understanding needs an answer, since “… understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood… application is an element of understanding itself.”\(^96\) It is a “… genuine experience… induced by the work, which does not leave him who has it unchanged…”\(^97\) In other words, if we cannot understand and apply the traditionary text, then we have not really read it at all, or so it would seem. This places the hermeneutical

\(^{95}\) Gadamer’s unique contribution is not that he was the first to see the problem of the Enlightenment presuppositions, although he does draw profound attention to the Enlightenment problem of authority grounded in technical expertise or ideological manipulation. Jeff Polet, “Taking the Old Gods with Us: Gadamer and the Role of Verstehen in the Human Sciences.,” *Social Science Journal* 31, no. 2 (April 1994): 179. Indeed, many anti-Enlightenment writers, such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault and others have pointed out similar problems along the way. The unique contribution of Gadamer is that he wishes to maintain openness to the possibility of biblical hermeneutics, something in which the others are uninterested. He wants to recover the "traditionary text" although he leaves the question of whether or not we should reappropriate the tradition itself open. However, scholars debate this. Sometimes Gadamer seems to be arguing exactly for a biblical understanding of history: "Only a biblical theology of time, starting not from the standpoint of human self-understanding but of divine revelation, would be able to speak of a 'sacred time' and theologically legitimate the analogy between the timelessness of the work of art in this 'sacred time.'" Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 120. He also makes use of the theological models of incarnation and trinitarianism as analogies for understanding the text, a move not unique to him, but important for understanding his project. Ibid., 418. For other hermeneutics who have adopted this analogy, cf., Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 162; Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2005); Herman Bavinck, *Prolegomena*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 1, Reformed Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2003), 434–435.


\(^{97}\) Ibid., 86. Indeed, aesthetics itself has to be absorbed in hermeneutics. Ibid., 157.
problem, which is the most difficult of all the issues surrounding the biblical text, squarely at the center of our attention.\textsuperscript{98}

In other words, we could think of it this way: it is as if one were to perform an autopsy and afterward complain that the corpse could not speak, when it is obvious that even if it were to experience resuscitation, the dissection process would have eviscerated its speech-making ability. In our particular case, critical scholarship correctly sees that the oracle in Jeremiah 22 most likely came from the mouth of Jeremiah himself, whereas the subsequent state of king Jehoiachin, at the end of the book, appears quite differently, and, again probably correctly, as the work of an editor or redactor. This is quite easy, as the text itself neatly marked this for us at the end of chapter 51. Here much scholarship ceases and never asks the question of understanding and application. Scholars may object and say that this task rightly belongs to the preacher in the synagogue or church. Nevertheless, Gadamer’s theory alerts us to the fact that is not just within the synagogue or church that these questions are important, but is a way for understanding the text itself.

This Shaphanide construction of the oracles and actions of Jeremiah served as

\textsuperscript{98} Historical-critical research, in its increase of knowledge, may actually distance us from understanding. It appears that Gadamer here has put his finger on a significant problem in biblical studies: post-critical biblical studies end up changing only the text into something reconstructed by a philosophy of history still dominated by Enlightenment concerns. There is no corresponding change in the scholar: "To reach an understanding… is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were." Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 371. In the case of the text, "… One intends to understand the text itself. But this means that the interpreter's own thoughts to have gone into re-awakening the text's meaning. In this the interpreter's own horizon is decisive, yet not as a personal standpoint that he maintains her and forces, but more as an opinion and the possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one's own with the text says. I have described this above is a 'fusion of horizons.' We can now see that this is what takes place in conversation, in which something is expressed that is not only mine or my author's, but common." Ibid., 390.
hermeneutical building blocks for the Babylonian exiles. The Shaphanides’ problem is the critical problem, as Gadamer has pointed out.\footnote{Nevertheless, Gadamer's theory is not without its problems. The discerning reader will wonder why we do not apply the hermeneutic of suspicion to Gadamer. It is for this reason: "… I do not think it is accurate to say that Foucault's genealogy is, by definition, antihermeneutics. The kind of hermeneutics that Foucault criticizes in his early The Birth of the Clinic is depth hermeneutics, a hermeneutics of suspicion, an attempt to uncover hidden truths obscured by ideology or other devices of distortion. But this is not the kind of hermeneutics that Gadamer has ever advocated, so Foucault's early critique does not apply to him." Michael Kelly, “Gadamer, Foucault, and Habermas on Ethical Critique,” in The Specter of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue, and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics, ed. Lawrence Schmidt, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 225. One concern is that sometimes Gadamer does not appear to have really overcome the problem of epistemology, but instead just ignores it. Rockmore, “Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and the Overcoming of Epistemology,” 59–60. Additionally, it does seem difficult for Gadamer to avoid the charge of relativism, and it is not always easy to distinguish his own view of historicality from Hegelian historicism. Joseph Margolis, “Three Puzzles for Gadamer’s Hermeneutics,” in The Specter of Relativism: Truth, Dialogue, and Phronesis in Philosophical Hermeneutics, ed. Lawrence Schmidt, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 91. Thus, it is not certain that he has been able to overcome the problem that White sees in Bultmann's appreciation of Heidegger, the intractable bifurcation between collective, objective history (Historie) and individual, existential history (Geschichte). Hugh C. White, “The Value of Speech Act Theory for Old Testament Hermeneutics,” Semeia no. 41 (January 1, 1988): 41. In addition, he provides no defense that his claim that one can recover historically the universal or classical tradition! Joseph Margolis, “Reinterpreting Interpretation,” Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 47, no. 3 (1989): 249.}

Thus, having recognized both the contributions and the difficulties, can we proceed to something constructive? Speech-act theory seems promising, especially because Austin included prophetic speech, even if only casually, in his original lectures on the subject.

_Speech-Act Theory as Promise and Problem_

J. L. Austin first introduced speech-act theory in his William James lectures at Harvard.\footnote{J. L Austin, How to Do Things with Words, The William James Lectures 1955 (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).} His student, John Searle, who has helpfully made the theory very accessible in his latest book, Making the Social World, has taken this up.\footnote{Searle, Making the Social World.} Speech-act theory has a
number of permutations, but the particular one that concerns us here is the idea that by saying something, one creates the deed. Examples often given are saying marriage vows, making promises, bets, etc., in which by the very act of speaking the act itself obtains. Post-Enlightenment historical criticism tends to date prophecies in the biblical text as postdating the events that they described. Yet this move takes away the possibility of investigating them as speech-acts. Along the lines of the historical-critical account, prophetic speech has value as descriptive speech only, an after-the-fact pronouncement, a vaticinum ex eventu of a previous situation that had already happened. Yet, when one reads the canonical text, one gets the distinct impression that there were times when that text intended to communicate that the words themselves were in some sense responsible for performing the action, as Kelvin Friebel has demonstrated.102

When Austin first gave his lectures, he included prophecy as one of the categories of speech that could qualify as a speech-act.103 Thus, speech-act theory has proven attractive to scholars attempting to truly “understand” the text (in the Gadamerian sense), not merely to attempt to reconstruct a sometimes speculative pre-history behind the

102 Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, 314.

103 Austin, How to Do Things with Words, 85–86. The possibility remains open that Austin may have been "… influenced, at least indirectly, by biblical form criticism." Martin J. Buss, “Potential and Actual Interactions Between Speech Act Theory and Biblical Studies.” Semeia no. 41 (January 1, 1988): 127. His student, Searle, has excluded this category, apparently, from his theory without explanation, although it probably relates to his religious biases. "… Beliefs in the supernatural, that I think are almost certainly false…” Searle, Making the Social World, 107. We note, though, that Searle might have drifted here, since many times this sort of speech relates to "magic," as if by incantations, one could produce a spell. However, given the many prohibitions against magic found in the canonical witness, it is unlikely that this is a helpful category to understanding the phenomenon of prophetic speech. This is decisively demonstrated in James W. Adams, “Speech Act Theory, Biblical Interpretation, and Isaiah 40–55: Exploring The Use and Value of the Philosophical Notions of Speech Act Theory for Biblical Interpretation and Specifically for Isaiah 40–55” (Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 2004), 134–135.
Prophetic speech seems like an especially informative category to examine, not only because of its sometimes-puzzling character in the Bible, but it “… is an enduring deep source of American rhetorical consciousness that taps into the wellsprings of our religious and social imagination.”

This theory, however, scholars have rarely applied to a particularly difficult category of prophetic speech, prophecies which appear to remain unfulfilled within the canonical witness.

However, one article develops the problem of “infelicities” which would appear to shed light on our hermeneutical problem. Although the article examined broadly the

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106 In fact, Grimes makes the case that while prophecies and rituals appear as "misfires" in the Bible, they tend to get scant attention: “Religious studies generally, and ritual studies in particular, typically ignore rites that do not do what they are purported to do. Although participants probably experience the
failure of ritual practice in religions other than Judaism or Christianity, there is a connection here. In the oracle against Jehoiachin, Jeremiah describes him as a pot to be shattered. This is reminiscent of imagery in Psalm 2, but more immediately, Jeremiah 17, where Jeremiah actually smashed a pot, representing the nation of Israel, as a way to confirm with a sign-act that his speech would receive fulfillment. Becking and Friebel have observed this connection. For the prophet, speech and sign are often interchangeable.¹⁰⁷ Thus, we can fruitfully discuss the problem of the infelicity or ineffectuality of Jeremiah’s oracle, noted by a later editor in Jeremiah 52, and all subsumed within the canonical text itself.

While much study has gone into the claims made in both the Old and New Testaments of fulfilled prophecy, and what that meant for the biblical writers, few have investigated what happens when a prophecy “misfires” (Austin’s term), as appears to be the case with the judgment oracle delivered in our text under consideration, Jeremiah 22:24-30.

This lack of attention may well be due to the way religious organizations themselves have tended to handle hermeneutics in the post-enlightenment timeframe, on both liberal and conservative sides. Fenn argues the churches themselves have participated in the secularizing split between signs and symbols that have progressively failure of ritual as often as they do the success of it, people who study rites pay little attention to the dynamics of ritual infelicity.” Grimes, “Infelicitious Performances and Ritual Criticism.” ¹⁰⁵

restricted the nature of religious speech.\textsuperscript{108} Moreover, as Grimes argues, prophetic and kerygmatic speech are some of the most performatively oriented types of speech in the Bible – and apparently, more prone to failure. However, the crucial point that Grimes makes here is that loss of illocutionary force (the speaker’s intent in the utterance) often accompanies loss of legitimacy.\textsuperscript{109} This bears directly on our problem: when Jeremiah prophesied the end of Jehoiachin, this prophecy was fundamentally different from every other prophecy against kings that he had made before. In every case, the institution of another would have followed the ending of one kingship. In this case, the prophecy that ended Jehoiachin’s kingship also ended kingship generally for Israel, and thus destroyed the complex of king, priest, prophet and sacred land that united the nation as a whole and provided the legitimate space within which the prophet could operate.\textsuperscript{110}

One may object, understandably, that other prophets prophesied during exile. This is, of course, true, but the prophecies that appear after exile usually appear either against the nation oppressing Israel, or toward a still-future restoration of the nation. Further, as Grimes applies speech-act theory to this particular category of speech, he notes that “ineffectualities” (procedures and speech that fail to bring about the proclaimed observable result) are more serious than mere flaws, because while the words sounded appropriately, the end did not obtain.


\textsuperscript{110} This is one place, at least, where speech-act theory would appear to yield a real result. We would not quite go so far as to say that it yields no special advantage to the analysis of particular passages, as in Joseph Margolis, “Literature and Speech Acts,” \textit{Philosophy and Literature} 3, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 50.
We find this serious problem in the oracle against Jehoiachin. However, speech-act theory, in its direct appropriation by Grimes from Austin (bypassing Searle) would appear to provide some explanatory power for why this particular oracle was ineffectual.\footnote{The reasons for bypassing Searle are his theological beliefs. There are difficulties associated with his approach, not the least of which is the problem of theological bias, in the case of John Searle. This is despite the fact that Searle must posit a superhuman figure to make his theory work, a figure that in a previous age would have appeared as an analog to Archbishop Paley's watchmaker. Despite his intent to provide a thoroughly naturalistic account of the evolution of human society, it is clear that Searle must introduce some theological categories at a few points, either to explain gaps in his system, or by way of analogy. There is one that is most problematic, his concept of the engineer at the end of chapter 4, which is foundational for this chapter: To get over the gap between prelinguistic and linguistic consciousness, he must propose an engineer to create human language. Searle, Making the Social World, 65. This engineer is personal, intelligent and possesses language, although human society does not. This engineer is able to assume the divine perspective, glancing backward and forward from pre-hominid to homo sapiens and can design a full-blown human language to facilitate this progression. Searle is not a theologian, so we should not be too hard on him here, but it is not hard to recognize that the only "person" who can possibly occupy this position is some sort of superhuman being, which Searle later says he does not believe in. Undoubtedly, Searle has made a mistake here, and I am sure that as he thinks about it further, he will probably figure out some explanation that better fits his theory. Nevertheless, even the most charitable read of Searle cannot get away from away from this significant problem. As a parallel example, we may think of Stephen Hawking in his book A Brief History of Time, where, despite the external pressures that may have influenced his argument, he argues that there are few places his theory can't explain, and this is where a divine being comes in. Whatever his reason for including it, at least Hawking is explicit about it, where Searle is not. Of course, Hawking's latest book now appears to have been able to solve that issue in his theory so that his theory no longer needs a divine being. Hawking is not saying that we therefore should get rid of religious belief, but rather that his theory no longer requires a "god-factor" to make it all work. Hawking has recognized it. Searle has not. Another similar example appears in Richard Dawkins and Dan Dennett, who believe that in their notion of the meme they have discovered a scientific explanation for the concept of a divine being. Unfortunately, Dawkins and Dennett are not theologians, and do not appear to realize that when they describe the meme, they are using language that theologians typically used to describe the image of god, not a divine being. It seems that Searle has made one of the same category mistakes. Since explaining this leap from prelinguistic to linguistic consciousness is the whole point of the previous chapter and the assumption upon which chapter 5 builds, it seems to be problematic for his theory. There may well be a plausible naturalistic explanation, but because Searle does not realize that he has imported a theological category to explain a gap in his system, he does not pursue this question far enough, in my mind. The clearest example of one of the central points of his book ("You make something the case by representing it as being the case.") is God saying in Genesis 1 "Let there be light!" Ibid., 100. What is the point in introducing a divine being when Searle intends to produce a naturalistic account and does not believe in that theological category anyway? Again, it seems to me to be category confusion that exposes gaps in his theory, rather than helping to explain it. The theory has also come under criticism from Stanley Fish who concludes that it cannot possibly serve as an all-purpose interpretive key since it itself is an interpretation. Stanley Eugene Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), 244. One has also argued that it does not provide any true advantage either at a universal level or in analyzing particular passages. Margolis, “Reinterpreting Interpretation,” 50.}
prophetic speech’s effectuality by destroying the kingship, an argument extrapolated especially by Anthony Thiselton as applied to prophetic speech in the Bible.\textsuperscript{112}

\textit{Refusing to “Give up Everything”}

There are difficulties that remain with Gadamer’s hermeneutic and with the application of speech-act theory to prophetic speech in biblical hermeneutics. These range from the global problem of hermeneutics to historical-critical problems and everywhere in between. Nevertheless, the failure of the Enlightenment to provide effective hermeneutical tools for canonical texts without destroying them, as argued persuasively by Gadamer, Childs and Frei, among others, does not by any means mean the end of the project. As Margolis states:

\begin{quote}
... Gadamer cannot convincingly recover either the ideal of the classical or the validity of hermeneutic understanding. But to give up those claims would be to give up everything. So the questions must be met.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

As difficult as the task of hermeneutics is, and as problematic as Gadamer’s method and the application of speech-act theory to biblical hermeneutics admittedly is, the goal nevertheless seems admirable and worth pursuing: that truly understanding the text means allowing it to transform us as it is applied to us in the fusion of horizons.\textsuperscript{114} In

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} McCabe, “How to Kill Things with Words,” 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Margolis, “Three Puzzles for Gadamer’s Hermeneutics,” 95.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} If there is a relativism still implicit, at least it can be something methodologically positive, still capable of assigning truth-values. Joseph Margolis, “Historicism, Universalism, and the Threat of Relativism,” \textit{The Monist} 67, no. 3 (July 1984): 308–326. The fact that language is a cultural phenomenon based on the complex practices of a society learned by a process of normal acquisition means that we could legitimately pursue interpretive consensus even if the result is only partial, specialized and contingently limited. Joseph Margolis, \textit{Culture and Cultural Entities: Toward a New Unity of Science}, 2nd ed. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 106, 87, 111. Certainly, if we can posit a continuum between pre-cultural and cultural formation, then we must also allow for some sort of continuum between cultures. Ibid., 144. While beyond the scope of this paper, Margolis developed this theory in detail: " Let us, for later convenience. say that texts intrinsically possess Intentional properties. A theory of interpretation is, then, a theory that: (i)
\end{itemize}
this, we find the hope for understanding an ancient oracle delivered by a prophet who appeared to have failed in his mission, and yet in that very speech-act, became part of a larger process of forming the larger speech-act of a scripture.

accounts for originally constituting or reconstituting texts as such by constituting would-be referents possessing intrinsically Intentional natures; and (ii) accounts for the interpretation of such texts in virtue of which pertinent claims about them may be assigned truth-like values and may be duly supported in an evidentiary way.” Margolis, “Reinterpreting Interpretation,” 239.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

A New Critical Framework for Jehoiachin and his Oracle

We noted at the beginning the various reading strategies employed in our study: interpretive educated guesses at times, only a plausible reconstruction of editorial intention, sometimes limited empirical evidence, philological precision and critical elaboration. Inevitably, these lines of inquiry ended up at various points running together with varying degrees of consistency. In the introduction, we tried to identify with broad strokes where these methodologies appeared in our study. Now it is time to see if it is possible to frame some unified account of the whole. Given that there are points where we have necessarily been speculative on interpretation, have attempted to reconstruct editorial intent without actual statements from the editors, and have worked with relatively sparse empirical evidence, we leave these in the background, to appear as supporting witnesses when necessary. We are not abandoning them, for without them it would be impossible to draw conclusions. On the other hand, as with many ancient texts and histories, on their own they are often problematic for the standard of certainty required for modern reconstructions. Therefore, we will focus on the final canonical arrangement of the text itself and a critical consensus based on modern scholarly study of the Bible from Duhm forward, with glances here and there at empirical, editorial and speculative interpretive observations, as they may fit within the broader picture.

To pair “critical” and “consensus” in the same sentence, let alone the same phrase, may raise eyebrows. The very definition of most critical scholarship is the development of competing viewpoints, a process that has often proven beneficial in
opening up new lines of inquiry into text and history. Nevertheless, for our reading strategy of the MT, as reflecting a particular perspective of the Shaphanides, who took their cue from the oracle against Jehoiachin, it will be fruitful to explore possibilities.

To build our consensus effectively, we will want to remember three important observations. First, we remember that Schipper observed that both rabbinic and critical commentators tend to import explanations for the oracle against Jehoiachin as explanations for it. We noted additionally that many precritical Christian interpreters did exactly the same thing. Second, we remember Leuchter’s observation that the direction in which the Jeremianic legacy would go was by no means determined at the time of exile. The Shaphanides under Baruch and Seraiah experienced significant competition from the homeland-group and possibly other places, and may have differed among themselves as well although family ties likely would have kept them working closely together. Thus, the struggle to understand the legacy of Jehoiachin appears intimately tied to the

115 However, just as in other fields, sometimes the impression appears that the only commonality among scholars is they oppose those about whom they write, thus making critical inquiry more of a performance for persuasion than a quest for new knowledge. Cf. O’Hara, *The Art of Reading as a Way of Life*, 3, 5.

116 Here, we assume the general consensus among scholars, that “…K.F. Pohlmann’s tracing of this ‘pro-Babylonian’ editing in Jeremiah places it very late… whereas all the indications are that it arose as an urgent issue affecting the survival of Judaean exiles very much closer to the time consequent upon Gedaliah’s murder… There seems little reason for dating it much later than the middle of the sixth century BCE. However, our primary concern is to note how it was the emergence of such a basic political issue, and its evident relationship to a position which Jeremiah himself had adopted, which has elicited extensive treatment by Jeremiah’s editors. It falls fully within the process that we can identify as that of the routinization of prophecy. This necessitated the elaboration and clarification of an inspired prophet’s message in relation to concrete political and religious issues. The message itself was sensed to lack the specificity which was needed if its import was to be fully heeded by the community which looked back with genuine trust and confidence to the prophet who was the interpreter of their times. Hence, we can claim that a genuine and positive relationship existed between the prophet and his editors. In no way were these latter trying to compensate for the limitations, or even errors, of the prophet whose heirs they felt themselves to be. Rather their profound respect for him made them eager and anxious interpreters of his words, spelling out in detail how they could be applied to the situation which his warnings and reproof had forewarned them of.” Clements, “The Prophet and His Editors,” 220.
polemics of exile in the generation immediately succeeding Jehoiachin’s capitulation. Third, we remember Childs’s observation, often missed in source-critical work, that the prose/B source is the all-important glue that holds the canonical work on Jeremiah, in both its LXX and MT editions, together. The Shaphanide scribes, most commentators agree, supplied that source. Thus, the very oracle of Jehoiachin itself illustrates a deliberate bonding together of prose and poetry to create a picture of Jehoiachin unique to the book of Jeremiah, and distinct from the DtrH.

We further noted that it reflects a view of the *Heilsgeschichte* of Israel distinct from the DtrH. It recognizes in the case of Jehoiachin a heretofore-unseen freedom of Yahweh to act in judgment or mercy, with Israel and all the nations and their kings, without reference to the Deuteronomic code. Given Jeremiah’s reliance on Deuteronomy, as most commentators agree, this seems profoundly important.

The Shaphanide scribes framed Jeremiah’s oracles so as to reflect a new reality for the nation of Israel that need not depend on the restoration of a covenant-keeping descendent of Jehoiachin to one day appear and assume the throne. Of course, the book of Jeremiah does not rule out this possibility, and Jehoiachin appears in Matthew’s genealogy for Jesus. Nevertheless, the genius of the Shaphanides was to create a literary framework for the time in between the Deuteronomic code and the “new covenant,”

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117 As Childs points out about the earlier critical formulation: “…von Rad’s description of a tradition-historical trajectory of actualization failed to deal adequately with the post-exilic process of the textualization of scripture which preceded and issued in the canonization of authoritative scripture.” Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 720.

118 If Lundbom is correct that the First Edition of Jeremiah was the oracles of chs. 1-20 (cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah*, 21A:95.), then the King Collection immediately following was essentially an updating of the end of the DtrH, with the additional oracles as well as B and C material in 24-51 reflects a filling out of the end of the monarchy viewed through the lens of Jeremiah and his associates, a reinterpreted DtrH.
whatever shape that might take. The scribes astutely noted that Jeremiah was often frustratingly vague on the details of the new covenant arrangement. He only said that people must prepare for a new reality without a temple, an ark of the covenant, and perhaps even a drastically revised kingship not necessarily in conflict with the ruling world empire – and it would take place in Babylon!

The critical question then becomes whether or not we can develop a critical framework, yes, perhaps even a consensus that will give us insight into this “depth dimension” of the text.\(^{119}\) Despite the strong theological agenda of the 19\(^{th}\)-20\(^{th}\) century Protestant confessionalism that tended to set the framework for most critical study until recently, there are grounds for optimism already in the scholarly, critical literature surrounding Jehoiachin. Let us return, then, to the brief summary we noted in the introduction and put together the pieces of the critical composite (to use another term some may consider an oxymoron!).

Although I am not convinced that Clements fully sees the distinction between the DtrH and Jeremiah’s account of the restoration of Jehoiachin, his observations on the oracle and the promise of the branch in Jeremiah 22:24-23:6 are important.\(^{120}\) There is an obvious dissonance between them, and it is a dissonance deliberately introduced, we argue, by the editors. This is precisely the point above, where we have argued that

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\(^{119}\) Hartmut Gese coined the term “depth dimension” in his criticism of Childs’s canonical approach. Job argues: “...Gese's concern for the axis of historical depth (\textit{historische Tiefendimension}) is not met by Childs, and weight should be given to Gese's contention that it is in the process by which the final text was produced that revelation from a theological standpoint subsists.” \textit{Job, Jeremiah’s Kings}, 179. However, this stands Childs on his head. It is precisely Gese’s point that Childs argues. It is difficult to understand how Gese and Job could misunderstand Childs on this point. Cf. e.g., Childs, \textit{Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments}, 92, 720.

\(^{120}\) Clements, “The Prophet and His Editors,” 220.
theological motives determined the editorial placement, namely the absence of stipulations of covenant wrongdoing. This is because of the dissonance that Clements rightly observes. In other words, the dissonance, for the Shaphanide editors, we argued, points to the new theological reality. Without critical scholars such as Clements pointing out the dissonance, one could easily have missed an important theological viewpoint of the Shaphanide editors.

The DtrH, the Chronicler and Jeremiah all share a common concern: to point out the flaws in the kingship that led to the demise of the nation of Israel and to exile. The DtrH, Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, all of which were receiving their final form in roughly the same period, are particularly concerned to relate the failure of the Kings of Israel to the Deuteronomic law of the King. Christopher Begg alertly noted that Jehoiachin appeared on the list of the “bad Kings” in the DtrH.\textsuperscript{121} However, Begg also noted that the DtrH does not record any repentance on the part of Jehoiachin as the Deuteronomic code required. As Begg observes:

\textit{“That fact, however, distinguishes our narrative from other texts in Dtr., viz. Deut. 4.29-31; 30.1-10; 1 Kgs 8.33-34, 46-53, which likewise speak of favorable developments subsequent to the Exile, but which emphatically link that possibility to a prior human turning to Yahweh (see too the familiar sequence in the book of Judges where Yahweh’s intervening against Israel’s enemies only follows in response to confession and appeal by Israel).”}\textsuperscript{122}

This raises a potential problem that the DtrH may not able to resolve fully.

Without the attention of critical scholarship, it would be hard to hear the difference in the voices between the DtrH and Jeremiah and the subtle but important change the


\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
Shaphanide scribes saw in the account of Jehoiachin that allowed them to see a new theological perspective, a new life for the nation of Israel without reference to the Deuteronomic code. The DtrH does not envision this future.

Brueggeman has pointed out the stylistic complexity the editors used for the oracle against Jehoiachin to make their case against unreliable homeland-group expectations about the kingship.

“The statement of vss. 28-30 is extremely subtle. The three-fold question of vs. 28 leads one to expect an indictment, showing that Yahweh’s rejection of Jehoiachin is based on his disobedience. A. Weiser (Der Prophet Jeremia, 195) finds in it a reproach against God. But the text provides neither. Rather, it passes on to a pathetic statement to the rejected land (vs. 29), that the Davidic promise is ended (vs. 30). So Weiser: ‘Denn das Wort besagt nichts Geringeres, als dass die Epoche des davidischen Königstums zu Ende ist.’ In a most radical way, the question refutes the conventional presuppositions of his hearers. The development of the text implies an indictment, but the delicacy of the text passes over it to the radical conclusion.”¹²³

Brueggeman’s use of rhetorical-criticism is foundational to many of the arguments that we have made about the oracle. Absent an understanding of oath-formulations and the use and importance of rhetorical questions in comparative literature from societies surrounding Israel, this important – and likely deliberate – nuance by the Shaphanide editors would go unnoticed. The radical conclusion itself is not stated, but left open for observation. The new kingly line will not look like anything that Israel has seen before.

Blenkinsopp’s seminal study on prophetism in Israel notes that the last years of Jehoiachin, as recorded in both the DtrH, Jeremiah and the Babylonian Chronicle.

¹²³ Brueggemann, “Jeremiah’s Use of Rhetorical Questions,” 368 n36.
remained in a good deal of obscurity. Yet, for all his obscurity, like the older story of Melchizedek, he assumes importance in later interpretation out of all proportion to the few details that appear in Jeremiah, the DtrH and the Chronicler. Blenkinsopp’s comparative study on the similarities between Israelite prophecy and the nations around them, as well as how the institution of prophet fundamentally changed with the removal of the kingship, thus severing an important symbiotic relationship that had generally obtained beforehand, is crucial. We would be unable to see the profound significance Jehoiachin’s oracle introduces at the critical moment of exile. It would be quite a long time before anyone would consider such commonality between the office of prophet and that of king. Indeed, it would take a good deal of hermeneutical explanation from New Testament writers desiring to use the prophetic legacy to undergird the kingship of Israel, as we see in the book of Acts. In fact, this hermeneutical turn in Acts represents a profound shift and, for Jewish believers who were conversant with their own tradition, raised the possibility of a positive relationship between prophet and king once again, as had obtained under the ideal kings of Israel’s glorified past.

Robert Carroll’s literary approach allows him to note the extreme contrast between the picture of Jehoiachin presented in Jeremiah 22 and that presented in chapter 52. He correctly observes that this is likely evidence of differing, perhaps even hostile, political factions among the Jews in exile. This literary approach allows him to bracket the historical questions and address the core theological concerns that the account of Jehoiachin’s oracle and its aftermath raise:


125 Cf., e.g. Moore, “Fourteen Generations,” 99; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 83.
The meaning of the piece is clear: in spite of being king, Coniah will go into exile, and any special relationship thought to exist between king and Yahweh will count for nothing. In strong imagery the deity is represented as swearing an oath and pulling the signet ring (i.e. the king) off his hand. Nothing can save the king. Given over to the Babylonians he, and his family, his retinue and many important officials of the land go into an exile whence they will not return. The same might have been said of Shallum (vv. 10-12), but why is so much more said about Coniah? Why is it said in such strong terms? Why does the prose statement have attached to it some poetic fragments which appear to make the same point? Among the kings of Judah neither Shallum nor Coniah could be considered significant, yet Coniah features in the cycle more prominently than any other named king. In order to relate vv. 13-19 to Jehoiakim an editorial note in v. 18a is required (who would read the verses as referring to him otherwise?), yet in vv. 24-30 Coniah is named twice. What is so special about him that so much material focuses on him? Why is he singled out for such treatment and why are the terms used of him so strongly expressed? To answer such questions requires incorporating vv. 28-30 into the discussion.126

We have not followed Carroll in resolving the issue with a sociopolitical explanation, yet his textual questions are critical. The two strands represent competing factions within Israel at the time of exile. While undoubtedly these factions existed, the editing of these texts would have taken place well after the fact. Further, both the LXX and MT keep the oracle in essentially the same structure, reflecting the fact that the Shaphanide circle in Egypt with Jeremiah and the one with Seraiah in Babylon likely shared a similar perspective. It is precisely in the interplay of the editorial framework for Jeremiah’s prophetic literature and the historical circumstances into and about which it spoke that one can discern an emphasis on the theological viewpoint destined to open a

126 Carroll, Jeremiah, 1986, 111–113. This argument is certainly more plausible after the discovery of the Jaazaniah and Gedaliah seals, which seem to confirm that Jehoiachin maintained the title of king even in captivity. May, “Three Hebrew Seals and the Status of Exiled Jehoiakin,” 146. Dearman argues that this is probably overreaching by Carroll. Dearman, “My Servants the Scribes: Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36,” 98–99. A nuanced and helpful explanation of how diaspora- and golah-politics may find their voices in these texts can be found in Sharp, “The Call of Jeremiah and Diaspora Politics,” 431. So also, esp., the discussion of the two different groups’ accounts of Jehoiachin in Leuchter, The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45, 159.
new world for Israel after the exile. Nevertheless, literary criticism as it has developed in relation to biblical studies is profoundly important for raising the very kinds of questions that Carroll raises, even if we supply different answers.

Schniedewind comes closer to a unified account and sees in the ascendance of Jehoiachin from chapter 22 to chapter 52 the evidence that the Babylonian scribal circle received authority over the production of the Hebrew Scriptures in exile. It is possible that Schniedewind overstates this case, and it seems that the textual traditions of both the LXX and the proto-MT in Babylon remained in conversation with each other, and perhaps even in flux, for a period of time. However, Schniedewind’s work has drawn attention to how critical scholarship has drawn attention to precisely this post-exilic editing of the book of Jeremiah. It is important for understanding how the voice of Jeremiah sounds in conversation with and in distinction from, the two other main literary works of this historical time, the DtrH and the Chronicler. The position of the Shaphanides allows them to think of a new future under empire. They could look for theological clues within Jeremiah’s works that would allow them to frame and order the words of Jeremiah to provide guidance for the Jewish people under a radically different historical situation. This was something that the pro-Egyptian group and the homeland-group were not able to do.

127 Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book, 149. Schniedewind’s views are not without their critics, e.g. Ehud Ben Zvi and John Van Seters: Ben Zvi, “The Concept of Prophetic Books and Its Historical Setting,” 78–83, n35. Essentially, they believe that the length of time Jehoiachin was in the Babylonian prison, 37 years, was sufficient to allow any enthusiasm for returning him as king to dissipate, so that it is unlikely that these hermeneutical strategies saw use as propaganda tools for the restoration of the king. Their point is important, but presses the issue too far, as there is clear evidence in the canonical text of Jeremiah itself of political factions, all of whom had a great interest in producing prophetic writings. Leuchter puts this issue succinctly: “Jeremiah xxvi is profoundly concerned with the legitimacy not simply of the prophetic tradition but of scribes as the curators and mediators of that tradition.” Leuchter, “The Cult at Kiriat h Yearim: Implications from the Biblical Record,” 540.
Childs notes the commonplace observation that Jeremiah 52 bears many striking resemblances to 2 Kings 25.\textsuperscript{128} We noted above that Childs also saw the importance of the prose/B source as the all-important “glue” that holds the oracular structure together. Childs’s ability to see the “depth-dimension” of the text in this way is critical to understanding the intent of the Shaphanides to carry on the legacy of Jeremiah in the new historical situation. This occurs not by writing new prophetic oracles, but by selectively and carefully rearranging them to take account of heretofore-unnoticed theological sensibilities in Jeremiah’s oracles that pointed to the end of the Deuteronomic code and the beginning of a new covenant reality for Israel at some point in the future. However, the import lies in the lack of stipulations of covenant wrongdoing against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah as opposed to the DtrH. It makes clear that Jeremiah wishes to make a differing theological point than the final chapter of Kings.

Christopher Seitz has perhaps best charted this process of development:

“If one were to chart the growth of this tradition, it might be represented as follows: a) Prediction of the end of the Davidic line (xxii 30). b) Redactional modification of this extreme pronouncement following in xxiii 5 ff. c) Preference of Jehoiachin over Zedekiah in the evaluation of the Golah redactors (lii 3i ff.). d) Future Davidic king to come from the line of Jehoiachin. As has been repeatedly noted, it was clear to the Golah community that the future of God’s people lay with those in Babylonian diaspora. The line of Jehoiachin was to be preferred over that of the king who remained behind in the land (see especially the final statement of the book of Jeremiah which hints at the future restoration of the Davidic line through the optimistic picture of the treatment of Jehoiachin, ch. lii 31 ff.).”\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{128} Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture, 347.

\textsuperscript{129} Seitz, “The Crisis of Interpretation over the Meaning and Purpose of the Exile,” 87–88.
This observation simply would not be possible without the source-critical, rhetorical-critical, literary-critical and ideological-critical perspectives of contemporary scholarship. It is precisely in this foment of exilic polemics that the Shaphanides achieved their prominence, not through force of arms, or oracular pronouncement, or charismatic leadership. They did it by masterfully arranging the works of Jeremiah in such a way as to not only account for the history that led to exile, but laying the groundwork for a future beyond.

Thus, there is no doubt that critical scholarship can provide a way to understand Jehoiachin and his oracle in the process of continuing formation of the new Israel after exile. While it has illuminated some problems with pre-critical exegesis, it also has illuminated to a much greater degree than before the critical textual issues and historical issues that later generations used. There is a hope and a future for Jehoiachin and his oracle, but those who fail to hear the distinctiveness of the voice of Jeremiah, unique in relation to the DtrH, Deuteronomy and the Chronicler, may fail to see it.

Perhaps the irony is that a critical scholarship born in the theological foment of 19th-century German confessional revisionism has failed to hear the theological import of the Shaphanide scribes. For they arranged the prose and poetry surrounding Jehoiachin into an oracle and a narrative that brilliantly took account of their past, as did the DtrH, but also, as the DtrH did not, their present in Babylon, and their future as laid out, however, briefly, by Jeremiah during the turmoil and heat of exile. Daniel Boyarin has argued recently that the development of the Talmud in the centuries following the

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Jewish-Christian split is evidence of an interpretive rabbinic tradition that sought to understand Babylon as a second homeland. If this is the case, it is further evidence of the enduring nature of the interpretive paradigms of the Shaphanides. They were able to arrange and the structure the canonical book of Jeremiah so that future generations could envision a future outside of Palestine. It was a platform that proved useful not only for the later rabbinic tradition, but for Josephus and the followers of Jesus as they strove to understand the monarchial history of Israel in the midst of world empire.

I have argued that there is a distinctive Shaphanide literary and hermeneutical framework discernible in the canonical final form of the text, as well as its developmental processes, and that this hermeneutical framework provides guidance for later interpreters such as the rabbis, Josephus and the New Testament writers in framing their arguments. I have further argued that the Shaphanide contribution to the hermeneutical options in exile rests primarily on their understanding of and editorial framing of the oracle against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24-30. Their theology that developed from it resulted in their arrangement and editing of chapters 45-52 in Jeremiah, the oracle against Baruch, the oracles against the nations, and their careful editing of the end of the Deuteronomistic History, which they likely took from 2 Kings 24-25.

Of course, the interpreters who followed the Shaphanides represent at least three, if not more, discernibly different applications of that method, but all of them show that

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they are familiar with it and base at least part of their argument on it. The Shaphanide scribal editors, far from being the dull, prosaic secretaries that Duhm describes in his description of Baruch, represent two compelling motivations. These were their efforts to be faithful to Jeremiah, and their efforts to edit and frame Jeremiah’s oracles and life in such a way as to provide guidance for future generations in a reality far different than their parents had known.

The Shaphanides’ Legacy in Jehoiachin

If Jack Lundbom’s suggestions for the development of the canonical text are accurate, as seems likely, then this Shaphanide editing process meant that the group in Babylon, perhaps under the direction of Seraiah, felt the liberty to rearrange and expand their inherited text in such a way as to take full advantage of the insights they discerned in Jeremiah’s oracles. Further, while to critical sensibilities this may seem to be an overriding of the prophet’s “original intent” there is no reason for believing that Jeremiah himself would have viewed this process in such a way. Chapter 36 and 51 clearly demonstrate that circumstances dictated that Jeremiah hand off the writing and editing of his works to the Shaphanide scribes, likely headed by Baruch and Seraiah in Egypt and Babylon respectively. In so doing, he was entrusting them with his works so that they could make sense of a new reality that he would never see personally.

The evidence we have gathered suggests strongly that early source-critical methods missed obvious signs of scribal editing of even the oldest poetic oracles, an

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132 For a description of how this process operated broadly at Qumran, see Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 65. However, Najman does not argue for a specifically Shaphanide interpretive model at Qumran, since it appeared to be used only in the three streams noted here.
editing formed by arranging them in the mouths of different speakers in a liturgical
dramatization to keep the remembrance of the past exile and a future hope open. This
liturgical context appears in Friebel’s description of the final sign-act recorded in
Jeremiah, which clearly shows the Babylonian context under the direction of Seraiah.\(^{133}\)

We saw that the reasons for this neglect of the oracle against Jehoiachin lay not in a
problem within critical methodology itself, but rather in the theological agenda of 19\(^{th}\)-
century Germany that strove to define a new religious impulse in the nomenclature of
historic Christian beliefs but vigorously opposed ideas such as the atonement theory of
the cross. This removed possible hermeneutical angles to understand the oracle against
Jehoiachin and its influence on the Shaphanides. Further, a new theory of the inspiration
of the Bible arose, a belief that source-critical studies could discern the \textit{ipsissima verba} of
the prophet and thus understand the “Word of God” hidden in the scriptures. Neither of
these new directions in theology was necessary to appropriate fully the new critical
methodology, but rather were part of a separate but related program that relied on
Nietzsche (in ways he did not approve) and the national quest for myth in modern
Germany. Of course, the scholarly guild no longer requires confessional subscription,
either conservative or liberal. Yet, perhaps this very lack of sensitivity to the theological
agenda of the new Protestant confessionalism leaves current interpreters working off a
framework with a vestigial confessional agenda.

We saw that the process likely begun by Jeremiah and Baruch in Jerusalem and
then Egypt continued later in Babylon. There, the Shaphanide scribes, by adding as little

\(^{133}\) Friebel, \textit{Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts}, 154–166.
as possible and taking away as little as possible from what they had received, arranged the oracles and narratives recorded in the book of Jeremiah to reflect a revolutionary new idea. Yahweh no longer dealt with Israel or the nations based on the Deuteronomic code and Israel’s new reality would need to account for this. This theological viewpoint first appeared in the oracle against Jehoiachin when they deliberately rearranged the King Collection to place this theological idea, seen in the life of Jehoiachin, last and most important in the line of kings before the promise of the “Branch.” They carefully combined prose and poetry in the oracle against Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24-30 and astutely observed what the DtrH and the Chronicler missed – that the records never mentioned any specific act of covenant-disobedience on Jehoiachin’s part. Thus, they were able to use the tragic life of Jehoiachin and his rehabilitation as a symbol for the way in which Yahweh would deal with Israel and the nations in the future. This was not because of the Deuteronomic code, but because of Yahweh’s freedom to act toward Israel and all nations without reference to the Deuteronomic code. They accomplished this not so much by drawing those conclusions themselves and inserting them into the canonical record, but rather:

“... biblical writers had their own way of submitting complex questions to the reader. They did this not with a nuanced argument, but by putting texts side-by-side so that different aspects of the problem were treated separately and in their own way. The intention was that the reader should relate these texts to each other to appreciate the full complexity of the problem.”

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We observed that this Shaphanide scribal theological viewpoint persisted after the exile and formed the basis for the future expectations of at least three groups: proto-rabbinic Judaism, Hellenistic Judaism (Josephus) and Jesus-followers, later known as Christians. The references to the specific questions surrounding Jehoiachin are relatively clear in the rabbis and in Josephus. They directly referred to the specifics of the stories numerous times throughout their writings, either to raise questions or make arguments.

Christian interpretation, however, is somewhat different. When we might have expected to see a parallel in a case such as Melchizedek, we found that the similarities were only on the surface and did not penetrate to the heart of the writer of Hebrews’ argument. We found a plausible appropriation of the Shaphanides’ perspective in the gospel of Matthew, which effectively removes all the kings from the King Collection except for Jehoiachin and Jesus, the presumed “Branch” of the line of David.

We found an possible application of this hermeneutical method in a place where we would not have expected it, The Acts of the Apostles. There, the writer skillfully uses the words of various prophets in the mouths of three of the most important pillars of the early church. S/he arranges them in such a way as to make a claim for the kingship of Jesus as the Jewish king before the eyes of the world, yet without any direct threat to the political stability of the Roman Empire. Although it is going too far to call this a fulfillment of the Shaphanides’ perspective six centuries and four empires previously, we can discern definable traces of the Shaphanides’ perspective in the writer’s argument.

The author refers to a definite historical figure who has suffered abject public humiliation and then places Jesus on the world stage peacefully, as “king of kings” who survives the catastrophic judgment on the cross, similar to the way in which the Shaphanides do with
Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 52. There, Jehoiachin is rescued from the judgment oracle of Yahweh against him, (possibly) goes through a Babylonian atonement ritual in which he does not know until the last moment whether he will be sacrificed or spared, and then is raised to a position over all other kings. The parallels are not exact, of course, yet if we are correct in this assessment, it is further testimony to the power of the Shaphanide interpretation of Israelite history, different from the DtrH and Chronicler, who saw the end of the nation in its last king, Zedekiah, and the failure of the nation as a failure of the kingship.

The Shaphanides shared the pessimistic view of the kingship, as did Jeremiah, but discerned a different future for the covenant people of Yahweh in one whom they believed was the last king, Jehoiachin. They saw in his oracle and subsequent rehabilitation a model for a new future for the nation. Luke’s triumph is in part the triumph of the Shaphanide view of history, for in his work a Jewish king (so known among his followers) appears on the world stage for a non-Jewish audience. In it, against all odds at the exile, Jeremiah’s unique perspective on history and empire comes to dominate. The fact that the Shaphanides could see this and promote it makes them some of the most far-sighted of ancient historians.

We further observed that speech-act theory is a helpful tool for contemporary readers to try to make sense of an apparently unfulfilled prophecy, or, in the language of speech-act theory, “infelicitous speech.” In the end, though, we saw that speech-act theory works best when the words accomplish what they speak, and when this fails to obtain, the theory struggles to explain it literarily. Yet, in this case, because we are dealing with both a historical person confirmed in both biblical and extra-biblical
accounts, as well as a distinct literary framework for him, the questions persist even if the
tory cannot answer them. Thus, following Margolis, we “refuse to give up everything”
and, following the lead of the Shaphanides, the rabbis, Josephus and the New Testament
writers, continue to try to find meaning in an uncompleted story, as the endings of both
Jeremiah and Acts demonstrate.

However, the impetus for the careful Shaphanide scribal editing process founded
itself on their understanding of and interaction with Jeremiah himself. Jeremiah correctly
announced the outcome of what some have described as the most momentous battle in the
last 2600 years, Nebuchadnezzar’s victory at Carchemish, establishing his path to world
imperial rulership. Perhaps most importantly, in chapter 28, he correctly predicted the
fate of Jehoiachin, against Hananiah, his main competitor. He established a pattern of
proclamation committed to his disciples and entrusted to them for a future that he was
often himself frustratingly vague about, most likely because he did not know it.136 Thus,
the Shaphanides were able to discern that Jeremiah, and not the prophets who opposed
him, had correctly discerned the path forward for the Jewish nation in a new reality that
was unimaginable prior to the exile. Their new identity would include nationhood and
covenant status with Yahweh apart from king, temple and, at least in some cases, even
the land itself.137

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136 Within the same century, Confucius would do the same thing in China, and 600 years later,
Jesus of Nazareth would walk self-consciously in those footsteps of Jeremiah himself. Whitters, “Jesus in
the Footsteps of Jeremiah.”

137 However, this varies considerably within the prophets, and within Jeremiah himself. The
extremes of Elephantine (temple but no Torah) and Qumran (Torah but no temple) are beyond our
consideration here. Cf. Levinson, Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel, 141.
When Jeremiah’s opponents had prophesied success for their king, they were simply following a well-established ancient near eastern practice where religion and its leaders, especially the prophets, were there to support the king in his ambitions. By taking an unpopular route with the religious establishment and going against the practice of ancient near eastern prophets in general, Jeremiah and the Shaphanides were able to save an identity for the nation that had reviled Jeremiah. Thus, they accomplished what no other ancient near Eastern civilization was able to do, the continuance of their religion after the end of their empire. They kept open a vision for a new world order where the old was obviously inadequate.

We stated at the beginning that the otherwise-insignificant life of Jehoiachin became a myth, not by fabrication or embellishment, but by literary framing, using the oracles, narratives and canonical structure of the book of Jeremiah to apply a new lens to his life by which later generations could see possibilities for the faithfulness of Yahweh in the fulfillment of his promise. Thus, the hopes of a book and a prophet which sounds mostly notes of judgment thus became tenable and sustainable, a hope and a future for the nation.

138 E.g., both the Mari prophets and, indeed the whole history of prophetism and kingship in Israel itself. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, 56–58, 60.

139 Ibid., 169. It was a process that the Jesus-followers would do as well as they came at the tail end of world imperialism, and saw in the speeches and narratives about Jesus, most especially his resurrection, a way to take the ancient Abrahamic faith and apply it to yet a new and distinctly different world situation.
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Appendix: Textual Studies

Table 4: Jeremiah 3:6-4:2

| Jeremiah reciting his dialogue with Yahweh | 6 And Yahweh said to me in the days of Josiah the king, saying,  

\[\text{“Have you seen what backsliding Israel did?} \]
\[\text{She is going} \]
\[\text{upon all the high mountains} \]
\[\text{and under all the spreading trees} \]
\[\text{and she is committing fornication there.} \]

\[\text{7 And, I said,} \]
\[\text{‘After she has done all these things,} \]
\[\text{she will return to me.’} \]
\[\text{But she did not return,} \]
\[\text{and her faithless sister, Judah, saw.} \]|
8 And I saw [to it] that on account of all the causes [for] which backsliding Israel committed adultery, that I sent her away, and I gave a certificate of divorce to her, but faithless Judah, her sister, did not fear, but she went and she also committed fornication.

9 And it came to pass, from the frivolity of her fornication that she defiled the land and she committed adultery with the stone and with the tree.

10 And moreover, in all these things, her faithless sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in deception.”

Utterance of Yahweh!

11 And Yahweh said to me, “Backsliding Israel justified her life more than faithless Judah.

12 While going, then you will call out these words to the north and you will say, ‘Return, backsliding Israel!’ Utterance of Yahweh!

“I will not let my face fall at you. For I am the Holy One.”

Utterance of Yahweh!

“I will not be angry forever!

13 Only know your guilt, for against Yahweh your God you rebelled, and you scattered your way to the strangers.


144 Or “rather” – see note at end of verse.

145 It is difficult to decide the sense of these words. In the only parallel passage in Job 32:2, the meaning does not seem to be that someone justified themselves in relation to God’s righteousness, but in comparison (falsely) to others. This may mean that Israel, just as she had led Judah into spiritual adultery, was now leading her into self-justification. Cf. Job 32:2 (NRSV) 2 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became angry. He was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God;
| under every spreading tree  
and to my voice you did not hear.”  

Utterance of Yahweh!  
14 “Return, backturning children!”  
Utterance of Yahweh!  
“For I, I have married you,  
and I will take you,  
one from a city  
and two from a people,  
and I will bring you to Zion.  
15 And I will give to you shepherds according to  
my heart,  
and they will shepherd you knowledge and  
insight.  
16 And it will come to pass  
that you will increase  
and you will become fruitful in the land in  
those days.”  
Utterance of Yahweh!  
“They will not say any more, ‘The ark of  
the covenant’ of Yahweh,” |

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146 “…presumably in view of the ark’s loss or destruction in the collapse of the city in 586 B.C.”  
Note that there is also a formula in play: “… prophetic visions of the postexilic ‘new age’ often include notions of the inauguration of a new moral and religious regime. Such visions often include formulae that distinguish current practice from future transformation: for example, ‘In those [future] days, no longer shall they say… but rather…’ (Jeremiah 3:16; 23:7-8; 31:29-30; cf. 16:14-15; Ezekiel 18:2).”  
Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel*, 47. See further “… broad aggadic technique which establishes exegetical meaning by correlation. In fact, these correlations may be of two types, polarity and analogy, and may occur with and without technical terms. Typical of the aggadic polarities, whereby a *traditum* is offset, demoted, or even replaced by a new *traditio*, are those several instances in the Book of Jeremiah with the prophet says ‘In those days… they will no longer say… [rather] in those days’… The correlation between the Ark and the city of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 3:16-17 is of a polar nature, contrasting a ‘type’ and ‘antitype’. According to the prophecy, the Ark, erstwhile manifestation of the throne of Yahweh in the Temple of Jerusalem, would be displaced (‘forgotten’, not ‘called to mind’) by the locus of Jerusalem itself. Not a cultic appurtenance but a royal city would be the new spiritual seat of the Lord: for the former was a physical and visible symbol of the divine reality, it proved of no spiritual consequence for the people who nevertheless ‘followed… the stubbornness of their evil heart’. Accordingly, and by contrast, the new invisible throne would replace its concrete prototype and be a place of divine presence for all peoples. Thus, despite the initial contrast, with its asymmetry of correlated items, a deeper nexus is brought to mind. For the new type is not so much a rejection of the older prototype as a substitute – re-establishing the primary intention of the Ark in the Temple of Jerusalem, viz., to be a focus for the presence of Yahweh.”  
and it will not rise in heart, and they will not remember it and it will not count and it will not be made anymore.

17 In that time, they will call Jerusalem the throne of Yahweh, and all the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem, and they will not continue to go after the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

18 In those days, the house of Judah will go to the house of Israel and they will go together from the land of the north to the land that I gave their fathers to possess.

19 Now I, I am saying, ‘How I will set you among the sons and I will give to you a treasured land, a possession of the most beautiful of the nations, and I said, ‘“My Father,” they will call me, and afterwards they will not turn back.”’

20 Surely, her sister dealt more treacherously than her neighbor; thus, you [both] have dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel!”

Utterance of Yahweh!

21 A voice upon the barren heights is heard, weeping, the sons of Israel pleading for mercy, because you have made your ways evil; you forgot Yahweh your God.

22 Return, backturning children; I will heal your backturning.

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148 "A peculiarity of the later prophets is the strangely emphatic designation of the land as צבי, 'glory' (Ezekiel XX.6, 15, 'most glorious'; Daniel VIII.9, XI.16, 41, 45, 'glorious'), it is even called 'the highest glory of the nations' (Jeremiah III.19 RSV, 'most beauteous of all nations')." von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I*, 1:305n.

149 Probably another case of the Lord expressing his disappointed expectations with Israel, in that this appears to be a desired ideal, not what really happened.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>‘Behold, we are coming to you, for you are Yahweh our God. 23 Surely, to the lie from the hills, the commotion of the mountains – Surely, in Yahweh our God is deliverance, Israel! 24 And the shameful thing ate the produce of our fathers from our childhood, sheep and cattle, their sons and their daughters. 25 Let us lie down in our shame and let our disgrace cover us, for against the Lord our God we, we have sinned, and our fathers, from our childhood until this very day, and we did not listen to the voice of Yahweh our God.’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>4:1 If you return, Israel…” Utterance of Yahweh! “Return to me! Now if you turn aside your vileness from my face and do not waver, 2 then you will be bound with an oath to the living Yahweh in faithfulness, in justice and in righteousness,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator/Leader</td>
<td>then the nations will bless themselves in him and in him they will praise!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

150 Another mixed metaphor.

151 Probably the hills, to agree with the only feminine noun in the previous verse גבעה.

152 Seems to be a reference to the Abrahamic covenant. “The consequence of Israel’s hoped-for loyalty confirms the book’s exilic context; its allegiance will redound to the benefit of the nations (v. 2; Carroll 1986: 156). Like Jeremiah, Israel has a mission among the nations, and like Abraham, the mission is to be a blessing (Gen 12:3).” O’Connor, “Jeremiah,” 2001, chap. 4.1.
### Table 5: Jeremiah 4:3-6:30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh to people through Jeremiah</th>
<th>3 For thus said Yahweh to each person of Judah and Jerusalem, “Till for yourselves furrows and do not sow seed to thorns; 4 circumcise yourselves to Yahweh and remove the foreskins of your hearts, each person of Judah and dwellers in Jerusalem, lest my anger will go forth like a fire, and will burn and will not be quenched in the presence of the evil of your deeds. 5 Declare in Judah and in Jerusalem let it be heard and say and sound the shofar in the land; call out – do it fully! – and say, “Gather yourselves together and let us go to the fortified cities. 6 Lift the standard toward Zion; take refuge; do not take a stand, for I am bringing evil from the North and a great breaking. 7 A lion arose from his thicket and was destroying the nations; he set out, he went forth from his place to set out [to] your land to the horror of your cities; they fell in ruins from [having] no dwellers 8 On account of this, gird yourselves in sackcloth. Jeremiah to people Mourn and wail, for the fierce anger, the wrath of Yahweh will not return from you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1 note the plural imperative, following the pattern in the previous two verses.  
2 note that all the verbs are plural imperatives in this verse.  
3 von Rad believes that the political predictions and threats of judgment are much less prominent in Jeremiah and the other earlier prophets (von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, 2:195.), And that the dominant feeling is that of complaint and suffering. This seems accurate, although he limits this to the war poems in chapter 5. Clearly, the working is already expressed in chapter 4, but the overall observation is correct – the theme of war comes from the passion of someone who has been deeply hurt.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh to the people through Jeremiah</td>
<td>9 And the utterance of Yahweh(^4) will come to pass in that day; he will destroy the heart of the king and the hearts of the princes and the priests will be desolated and the prophets will be astounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 And Lord Yahweh said, “Aha! Surely you have utterly deceived this people, both saying to Jerusalem there will be peace for you while the sword is yet touching the flesh!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people’s lament</td>
<td>11 At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “A spirit, dazzling from the barren heights in the wilderness;⁵ The way of the house of my people is not to winnow and not to purify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh’s response to the people through Jeremiah</td>
<td>12 A spirit more full than these will come to me then; moreover, I am speaking judgment to you. 13 Behold, as the clouds he ascends, and his chariots are lighter than the birds, and his stallions – woe to us, for he is devastating us. 14 Wash your heart from evil, Jerusalem, in order that you may be rescued; How long will you recline in your inward parts in thoughts of your vigor? 15 For a voice is declaring from Dan, and evil is heard from Mount Ephraim. 16 Cause the nations to remember; behold, make them hear on account of Jerusalem which is keeping watch on those coming from the distant land, for they gave out their voices on account of the cities of Judah. 17 As those keeping watch over a field, they came upon her from the surrounding [region],</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^4\) Note this one place where this phrase does not appear in the middle of a declaration, breaking it up, but actually seems to be part of it.

\(^5\) Perhaps a reference to Sinai, if it were translated “wind”? 266
| Jeremiah’s complaint to the Lord | for they rebelled against me. Utterance of Yahweh! 18 Your way and your deeds are making these [things] yours; this is your evil that is bitter, that touched upon your heart. 19 My innards! My innards! My heart cannot be stilled, for I hear the sound of the shofar; it blasts my life with war. 20 Wound upon wound is called for all the land has been devastated; suddenly my tents are devastated, my tent curtains in a moment. 21 How long will I see the banner? Hear the sound of the shofar! 22 For my people are a fool; me they do not know. |

| Yahweh’s response to Jeremiah’s complaint | 6 “Anguish is more literally “entrails,” which the Hebrews considered the seat of emotion. In 31.20 the same noun is translated “heart” by RSV: “Therefore my heart yearns for him.”” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 136. 7 “The poems are, to be sure, so graphic that one might suppose that they were composed while invasion was actually in progress. But, the some of them may have been, this is by no means necessarily true of them all. The prophet had long been haunted by a premonition of disaster, and his imagination was exceedingly vivid. Moreover, he probably worked, albeit in a most original way, with symbolism and phraseology developed long before his time to describe the day of Yahweh… The section thus combines and masterful fashion predictions of judgment uttered by the prophet over a period of years, and expressions of his own personal agony when it came to pass.” Bright, Jeremiah, 1965, 21:34. 8 “… They are so shot through with the prophet's sensory perceptions as to leave no doubt of their visionary and auditory character.” von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:67. These are presumed to be ecstatic experiences. But this need not be the case. If Jeremiah felt the anguish of his people's judgment in such strong terms, it would undoubtedly have had a physiological effect, without necessarily inducing any trans-like state. Cf. also Young’s discussion of Mowinckel's questionable distinction between "spirit" and "word" prophets based on Jeremiah 5:13. Edward J. Young, My Servants, the Prophets (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1952), 130–136. 9 “… The future is described wholly from the standpoint of a man who is feeling pain before it takes place, and it is as much as he can bear… We are conscious of the prophet's feeling of solidarity with his people in their danger, and even with the land itself and hers, such as we shall never meet with again.” von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:196. 10 "Most of Jeremiah so-called confessions (11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-20; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-11) were conflicts such as this one." Walter C Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), 228. |
Jeremiah’s lament over Yahweh’s actions

Children of fools are they;
They have not been taught wisdom;
They are being made to do evil
And they do not know how to be made to do good.

23 I see the land,
and behold, it is formless and empty
and there are no heavens\(^1\)
and there are no lights.\(^2\)

24 I saw the mountains and behold they were shaking,\(^3\)
and all the hills were steadily receding.\(^4\)

25 I saw and behold, there was no man
and every bird of the heavens fled.

26 I saw and behold, the fertile land [was]
a wilderness
and all its cities were broken down
before the presence of Yahweh,
before the presence of his fierce anger.\(^5\)

Yahweh’s council

\(^1\) “This reference to astronomical events is Old Testament language for the time of God’s judgment at the final battle (e.g., Is 13:10; 24:23; 34:4; Ezek 32:7–8; Joel 3:14; Zech 14:6). Similar cosmic language was sometimes applied to judgments or other divine acts in history as well (e.g., Ps 18:6–19; Jer 4:20–28; Sibylline Oracles). Darkness was apparently a frightful judgment in antiquity (Ex 9:21–23). Both Jew and Gentile regarded signs in the heavens as portentous, and some signs in the heavens (on a much smaller scale) were reported to have accompanied the fall of Jerusalem.” Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, CD-ROM (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), bk. Mt 24:29.

\(^2\) note the language from Genesis 1. “… The evidence of an Urszeit-Endzeit pattern within Israel's overwhelming. There is to be a returning chaos (Jeremiah 4.23), a new creation (Isaiah 65.17), a new paradise (Amos 9.13 ff.; Isaiah 11.6 ff.), And the new covenant of peace between man and beast (Hosea 2.20 (EVV: 2:18); Isaiah 11.6 ff.). Moreover, the entire redemptive history of Israel repeats itself and the eschatological age. There is to be a redemption again from Egypt and the passing through the sea (Isaiah 10.26; Zechariah 10.10 f.; Isaiah 43.16 f.). The miracles of the wilderness return (Micah 7.15; Isaiah 43.19), a new covenant is established (Jeremiah 31.31 f.), And the new David will appear who re-establishes his kingdom (Hosea 3.5; Jeremiah 30.9; Ezekiel 34.23). Furthermore, the vocabulary used in these descriptions makes it abundantly clear that the matching of the eschatological events with the past entails far more than a mere device for achieving contrast. The intention is obviously to describe the future as analogical to the past.” Brevard S Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., Studies in Biblical Theology 27 (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), 77–78.

\(^3\) Another reference to Sinai?

\(^4\) possibly a reference to the Flood story?

\(^5\) “… There is a larger structural pattern found in both the Old and New Testament that offers a canonical context for better understanding Paul's eschatology; namely, just as the prophetic and apocalyptic witnesses within the Old Testament were distinct but often fused and intertwined (Jeremiah 4:23-26;
27 For thus says Yahweh, 
   “Desolation will come to pass to all the land, 
   but a complete and will not be made. 

28 On account of this, 
   the land will mourn 
   and the heavens will grow dark from above 
   on account of which I said, 
   ‘I am planning, 
   and I will not relent, 
   and I will not turn from it.’”

29 From the sound of the cavalry and the hurling of bows all the cities are fleeing; 
   they are going in the clouds 
   and in the rocks they are ascending; 
   all the cities have been abandoned 
   and there is not one person dwelling in them. 

30 And you have been desolated! 
   What did you do that you washed [with] scarlet? 
   For you adorned yourself with ornaments of gold; 
   for you tore off your eye paint from your eyes; 
   you became beautiful to the point of vanity; 
   those who lust after you have rejected you; 
   they are seeking your life.

31 For I hear a sound as if someone were sick, 
   trouble as one bearing her first child, 
   the sound of the house of Zion gasping for breath; 
   she is spreading out her hands, 
   “Woe – please! – to me! 
   For my life is exhausted by killers.”

5:1 They are roaming about in the public

---

Ezekiel 39:1-23), so also in the New Testament the eschatological traditions of the Gospels were distinct from those of the apocalyptic pulp but nevertheless were also often fused... The Bible's enduring apocalyptic a witness, whether from the Old Testament or the New, sounded confident but also terrifying and hunting note for Christians in every age: do not grow to comfortable at home in your earthly world because God's kingdom will, in the latter days, not as a result of human moral strivings, performed with the best of will, but when God suddenly breaks off human history and his kingdom descends from above is a radically 'new heaven and a new Earth' (Isaiah 65:17-18; Revelation 21:1-4).” Brevard S Childs, *The Church’s Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2008), 217–218.
Jeremiah to Yahweh

Now please see and know and seek in your public places whether you are finding anyone, if there exists someone who does justice, seeking truth – then I will forgive her!

2 And if they say, “Yahweh lives!” it is only to swear a lie.

3 Yahweh, are your eyes not upon faithfulness? They were struck and did not become ill; he finished them, they refused to take discipline; he was harsh – their faces were more than stone. They refused to turn.

4 But I said, “Surely, these are the poor, they became foolish. For they did not know the way of Yahweh, the judgment of their God.

5 Let me go to my [kind], to the great ones, and I will speak with them for they knew the way of Yahweh, the justice of their God; surely, they together broke the yoke, they tore off bonds.

6 On account of this they were struck by a lion from the forest; a wolf from the desert devastated them; a leopard was watching over their cities. All those who went out from her were ripped apart, for they increased their rebellions, they made their backslidings numerous.

7 To what extent shall I forgive you? Your children abandoned me and they were sworn to what is not God; and I satisfied them, and they committed adultery.

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16 “Somewhat like Diogenes, the Greek Cynic philosopher of the fourth century B.C., the people of Judah are asked to traverse the city and search for an honest (or in this case, a just) man.” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, chap. 5:1.
Jeremiah agrees with Yahweh

8 Virile stallions in rut are they,
each one shouting out to the wife of his neighbor.
9 Shall I not visit them?
   Utterance of Yahweh!
And if among the nations are any as these?
   Shall my life not be avenged?
10 Go up to her vineyard
   and destroy it,
   and finish it [off]!
   Do not work it.
   Their tendrils shall not return,
   for they do not belong to Yahweh.
11 For surely the house of Israel
   and the house of Judah are
   unfaithful to me.
   Utterance of Yahweh!

Yahweh’s counsel to Jeremiah

12 They cringe at Yahweh,
   and they say, “Not him!”
   And she will not come up to me.
   Evil and sword and famine!
   But we will not see.
13 And the prophets are but spirit,
   and the word is not in them.
   Thus it will be done to them.

Yahweh to the people through Jeremiah

14 Therefore, thus says Yahweh, God of armies,
   “Because of your speaking this way
   I am giving my word in your mouth
   to be fire,
   and this people are wood,
   and it will consume them.
15 Behold, I am bringing a distant nation upon you, house of Israel.
   Utterance of Yahweh!
   It is an everlasting nation;
   it is an eternal nation,
   a nation whose language you do not know,
   and you will not hear what it is saying.
16 Its quiver is as a burial site which has been

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17 this could be a reference to pagan practices associated with the fertility cult (Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:86n. But in context, it could be possibly a negative reference to the circumcision/uncircumcision theme? Cf. Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 315–316. This became a jarring theme of Paul’s. Richard B. Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 44.
Jeremiah’s message from Yahweh to the people

Yahweh’s observations about his people

Yahweh to the people

Yahweh to Jeremiah

opened;
they are all mighty warriors.
17 And it will consume your harvest
and they will eat your sons
and your daughters he will eat;
your sheep and your cattle he will eat;
your plants and your figs he will destroy.
Your fortified cities in which you trusted are the sword’s.

18 And, moreover, in those days –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
I will not finish you off.

19 And it will come to pass that they will say,
“On what account did Yahweh our God do all these things to us?”
And you will say to them,
“Just as you abandoned me
and you served the gods of foreigners in their lands,
so you will serve strangers in a land that is not yours.”

20 Report this to the house of Jacob, and make them hear in Judah, saying,

21 “Please hear this,
foolish people and with no heart;
you have eyes and you do not see;
you have ears and you do not hear.
22 Do you not see me?”
Utterance of Yahweh!

“If in my presence you do not linger over that which I placed,
sand as a boundary to the sea,
an eternal regulation,
and they do not cross over,
and they shake but they do not consume,
and the surging waves groan and they do not cross over it –

23 – but to this people there was a stubborn and rebellious heart.

They turned aside and they went.

24 And they did not say in their hearts,
“Please, let us fear Yahweh, our God,
who is giving fall and spring rain in its time,
the regular weeks of harvest he is keeping for us.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeremiah to his fellow priests at Anathoth</th>
<th>Jeremiah to the priests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 25 Your iniquities – they were spread out and your sins have kept the good away from you.  
26 For evil things are found among my people.  
He watches, as receding\(^{18}\) fowlers they stand, destroying the men they capture.  
27 As a basket filled with birds,  
thus your houses are filled with deceit – that’s why they have increased and have become rich.  
28 They have grown fat; they have grown sleek; moreover, their evil words have transgressed judgment  
they do not judge justly the fatherless, nor cause them to succeed, and justice for the poor they do not judge.  
29 Shall I not visit these things?  
Utterance of Yahweh!  
If among the nations there are none such as these, my soul will not avenge.  
30 Desolation and horror have been brought about in the land.  
31 The prophets are prophesying by deception and the priests are scooping it into their hands; yet my people loved it thus.  
But what will you do in the future?  
6:1 Seek refuge, sons of Benjamin, from the inner parts of Jerusalem,  
and in Tekoa they will sound\(^{19}\) the shofar,  
and upon Beth Hakerem place a cloud, for evil has been made high from the North, and a great wound.  
2 The loveliness and the delicacy I compared to the house of Zion.  
3 To her went shepherds and their herds; they sounded a trumpet against her, tents surrounding, |

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\(^{18}\) hiding, concealing?  
\(^{19}\) note the consonant similarity of the place name and the verb in this phrase: תִּקְע֣וּ וּבִתְק֙וֹעַ֙
of Anathoth regarding Yahweh’s counsel, each man shepherded his hand.

Yahweh to Jeremiah

4 Make holy war against her; arise and lift up in the noon day. Woe to us, for the day has turned! For the shadows of the evening spread out.

5 Arise and go up in the night and let us destroy her citadels.

6 For thus says Yahweh of armies, “Cut off the wood and pour out upon Jerusalem siege ramps. She is the city which has been visited; her fullness of oppression is in her midst.

7 As a well keeping its water fresh, thus she keeps fresh her evil, violence and destruction; illness and injury will be heard continually in her.

8 Discipline Jerusalem lest she destroy my life from you, lest I place you in a land of desolation and uninhabited.”

Jeremiah to the reader/hearer

9 Thus says Yahweh of armies, “They will surely glean, like a vine, the remnant of Israel. Return your hand as the fruit is upon the vine.”

10 On whose account must I speak? Now let me bind and they will hear. Behold, O uncircumcised in hearing! But you will not be able to listen. Behold, the word of Yahweh became to them a disgrace; they did not delight in it.

11 And I filled up with the venom of Yahweh; I was not able to hold back; pour it out upon a child in the streets and upon a council of soldiers together, for even a man with his wife was captured, an elder of full days.

Jeremiah to the people

12 And their houses were surrounded to the hind parts, the fields, and the women together, for I caused my hands to spread out upon those dwelling in the land.

Utterance of Yahweh!

13 For from the smallest to the greatest all of them were getting ill-gotten gain; both from prophet and to priest,
through Jeremiah

Yahweh to the nations

all of them were doing deception.

14 And they healed the wound of my people on account of it getting smaller, saying, “Peace, peace,” and there was no peace.

15 Be ashamed, for they made idols – yes, shameful! – they are not ashamed; their being disgraced they did not even know; therefore, they fell in their falling, in the time of their visitation they stumbled.

Word of Yahweh!

16 Thus says Yahweh, “Stand upon the ways and see and ask concerning the paths of eternal life. Where is this good way? Now let us walk in it and find relief for our souls.”

And they said, “We will not go.”

17 And I raised up over you a sentinel; listen to the voice of the shofar. And they said, “We will not listen.”

18 Therefore, hear O nations, and listen O congregation which is in them.

19 Hear, O land, for behold, I am bringing evil to this people, the fruit of their thoughts, for on account of my word they did not listen – even my law, and they rejected it.

20 What is this to me, frankincense from Sheba; and you went and the good branch from a distant land, your sacrifices, are no pleasure; and your sacrifices are not pleasing to me.

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20 Apparently a reference to the false security engendered by the success of Joe reforms.

21 part of the blessing given to David by Amasai, the chief of the 30 in 1 Chronicles 12.19. "But it is more than that. Amasai is responding to David's query about the loyalty of those who had come to him (1 Chronicles 12.18). This context shows that Amasai both pledges to help David and exhorts his comrades to follow David." Schniedewind, The Word of God in Transition, 109. Cf. also the longer discussion surrounding and particularly note 68 on page 110 on the difference between that passage in this.

22 That must have sounded strange, an edah among the nations?
| The people to Yahweh | 21 Therefore, thus says Yahweh,  
| Jeremiah to the people | “I am giving to this people a stumbling block, and they  
| The people’s complaint | will stumble upon it,  
| Yahweh to Jeremiah | fathers and sons together,  
| | neighbor and countryman together.  
| | 22 Thus says Yahweh,  
| | “Behold, a people is going from the land of the North,  
| | and a great nation is aroused from the borderland.  
| | 23 Bow and spear will become harsh;  
| | it is cruel  
| | and they will not be loved;  
| | their sound is as the sea;  
| | they are groaning, and upon horses they are  
| | riding,  
| | each man ranked for war against you, house  
| | of Zion.  
| | 24 We hear his message,  
| | our hands hang limp,  
| | trouble has treated as harshly as the one bearing a child.  
| | 25 Do not go out to the field, and do not go in the  
| | way,  
| | for the sound of the enemy is a surrounding  
| | terror.  
| | 26 House of my people,  
| | tie on sackcloth,  
| | and roll around in the ashes of the mourning-ceremony;  
| | only child, I made for you wailing and bitterness,  
| | for suddenly the destruction came upon us.  
| | 27 An assayer I gave you among my people,  
| | and you will know and you will test their ways.  
| | 28 All of them have completely turned aside,  
| | going as a gossip;  
| | they are all copper and bronze;  
| | they are corrupted.  
| | 29 The bellows was burned;  
| | from their fire,  
| | lead was surely refined in vain,  
| | and their evil is not drawn off.  
| | 30 Despised silver they called  
| | themselves,  
| | for Yahweh despised them. |
Table 6: Jeremiah 7:1-8:3

| Scribe | 7:1 The word which came to pass to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying  
|        | 2 “Stand in the gate of the house of Judah  
|        | and call out there this word,  
|        | and you will say,  
|        | ‘Hear the word of Yahweh,  
|        | all of Judah,  
|        | those going in these gates to worship Yahweh,¹  
|        | 3 Thus says Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,  
|        | “Make your words and your deeds good,  
|        | and I will dwell with you in this place.  
|        | 4 Do not trust in yourselves,  
|        | to the words of deception,  
|        | saying, ‘Temple of Yahweh,  
|        | Temple of Yahweh, Temple of  
|        | Yahweh are these.’  
|        | 5 For if you surely make good your words and  
|        | your deeds,  
|        | if you surely do justice between a man and  
|        | his neighbor,  
|        | 6 do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless  
|        | and the widow,  
|        | and do not pour out innocent blood in this  
|        | place,  
|        | and do not go after other gods to your evil,  
|        | 7 then I will dwell with you  
|        | in this place,  
|        | in the land which I gave to your  
|        | fathers,  
|        | to be from eternity to eternity.  
|        | 8 Behold, you are trusting to yourselves,  
|        | on deceptive words,  
|        | without succeeding.  
|        | 9 Why are you stealing, murdering and  
|        | committing adultery,  
|        | making deceptive oaths  
|        | and making smoke-offerings to Baal  
|        | and going after other gods which you  
|        | have not known?²  

¹ “In connection with the so-called Temple address in the year 609, the tradition contains the  
prophet's words (Jeremiah VII.1-15) and independently a story which describes the incident (Jeremiah  
And you are going
and you are standing before me in this house
which is called by my name upon it
and you are saying,
‘We are delivered, because of making all these
idols.’

Why has this house, which is called by my name upon it,
become a cave of thieves in your eyes?³
Behold I, I have seen!
Utterance of Yahweh!

For I beg you,
go to my place which is in Shiloh where I, my name, dwelt
there at first
and see what I did to it in the presence of the evil of my people
Israel.

And now, because you did all these deeds
– utterance of Yahweh! –
and I spoke to you,
rising up early in the morning and speaking
and you did not listen,
and I called to you
and you did not answer,

I will do to the house⁴ which is called by my name upon it
which you are trusting in,

² Von Rad’s point is important for our overall view of prophecy in relation to kings. "Despite the
fact that they only occasionally cite chapter and verse for any ancient legal statutes (Hosea IV.2 and
Jeremiah VII.9 site a ten-member or twelve-member commandment series), there can be no doubt that the
prophets based their accusations on specific legal statutes, which we can for the most part identify. All this
is no doubt true: but it fails to grasp the gravaman of their charges. The point is not simply that in this case
there is a breach of one commandment of the old law given by God, and in that the breach of another: the
point is Israel's total failure vis-à-vis Yahweh." Ibid., 2:396.

³ “Jesus’ criticisms of the temple establishment cannot be adequately probed and understood apart
from careful consideration of Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.” Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27-16:20, ed. Metzger, Bruce
Mark 11:15-19 Jesus' action of cleansing the temple is explicitly set by Mark in the context of Jeremiah's
judgment of the Jerusalem temple ('a den of robbers,' Jeremiah 7:11) and of Isaiah's oracle, 'my house shall
be called a house of prayer for all nations' (Isaiah 56:7). Hayes then very skillfully shows how by carefully
interpreting and expanding the Old Testament imagery, Mark's use of the Greek Old Testament is far from
a conventional proof-texting, but is a way of greatly enriching Jesus' prophetic action by establishing Jesus

⁴ “… Jeremiah’s arraignment for forecasting doom against the Temple and Jerusalem (cf. Jeremiah
7:14, 26:6) produced a ספירות תיקון in the book of Kings. [1 Kings 9]." Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in
Ancient Israel, 459. “Jesus was not the only one to make predictions of the doom of Jerusalem or its
temple. Several predictions are found in intertestamental literature: your holy places will be made
desolate [ἔσται τὰ ἅγια υμῶν ἐρημα]. (T. Levi 16:4; cf. 15:1) destruction . . . slaughter . . . plunder . . .
consumption of God’s sanctuary by fire. (T. Jud. 23:3) But again the kings of the peoples will launch an
and to the place which I gave to you and your fathers,
just as I did to Shiloh.

15 And I will cause you to be thrown out from my
presence,
just as I caused all your brothers to be thrown out,
the seed of Ephraim.
| Yahweh | 16 And you, 
do not pray on account of this people, 
and do not lift up rejoicings and prayers on their account, 
and do not lash out at me, 
for I am not listening to you. 
17 Are your eyes seeing what they are doing in the cities of Judah 
and in the streets of Jerusalem? 
18 The sons are gathering wood 
and the fathers are burning the fire 
and the women are making dough 
to make sacrificial bread to the Queen of Heaven 
and they are causing libations to be poured out to other gods 
in order to make me angry. 
19 Is it I they are making angry? 
Utterance of Yahweh! 
Is it not they, to the shame of their faces? |
| Jeremiah | 20 Therefore, thus says Lord Yahweh, 
“Behold, my anger and my venom are being poured out on this place, 
upon the men, 
upon the beasts 
and upon the trees of the field, 
upon the fruit of the ground, 
and it will burn and will not be quenched.” 
21 Thus says Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,\(^5\) 
“Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.\(^6\) 
22 For I did not speak to your fathers, nor command them, 
in the day of bringing them from the land of Egypt, 
concerning words of sacrifices and offerings. 
23 Only this word I commanded them, saying, 
“Listen to my voice, 
and I will be to you as God 
and you will be to me as a people,”\(^7\) |

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\(^6\) "… The fact is that in no case is the holocaust-offering eaten; it is always totally consumed on the altar. Hence, when Jeremiah told people to eat the flesh of their offerings, he is telling them to violate a fixed cultic *tradtum* – one that was established and authoritative in his time. If, in this, the prophet is referring to the public offerings of the Temple, then the violation would be twofold; for, unlike the voluntary meat-offering of individuals, the flesh of the required meat-offering was prohibited to the laity and given to the clerics as a divinely ordained perquisite. Admittedly, Jeremiah's remarks are rhetorical and hyperbolic, and are primarily aimed at underscoring the worthlessness of holocaust- and meat-offerings performed by those who violate the covenant." Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 306.
then you will walk in all the ways I command you, in order that it may go well with you.”

24 But they did not listen and they did not open their ears, and they walked in the counsels of the stubbornness of their evil heart, and they were backsliding, and [were] not in my presence.

25 From the day your fathers went out from the land of Egypt until this day, I sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending daily in the mornings.

26 But they did not listen to me, nor did they open their ears, and they made their evil necks more stubborn than their fathers.

Yahweh

27 And you will speak to them all these words, but they will not listen to you, and you will call to them and they will not answer.

28 And you will say to them, “This is the nation which also did not listen to the voice of Yahweh, their God, and they did not receive discipline; they abandoned faithfulness and were cut off from my presence.

Yahweh

29 Shear your diadem, and cause it to be cast aside and raise a lament upon the barren heights, for Yahweh rejected and forsook the generation of his wrath.

Jeremiah / Narrator/Leader

30 For the sons of Judah did what was evil in my eyes – utterance of Yahweh! – they placed their vileness in the house which is called by my name upon it to make it vile.

31 And they built the high places of Tophet which are in Ben-Hinnom.

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7 “… The Priestly Document made a further orientation of that history, one which looked towards the revelation at Sinai. For God did not only promise land and children to the patriarchs. He promised them in addition to be their God and their children's God, and thus gave them the prospect of a special kind of relationship to himself.” von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I*, 1:169.

8 “… Jeremiah is to be regarded as a late-comer in the prophetic series. At the same time, he is completely conscious of his spiritual ancestry – he speaks more than once of the prophets who preceded him.” von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, 2:205.
to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire which I did not command them and it did not ascend upon my heart.

32 Therefore, behold the days are coming – utterance of Yahweh! – and it will not be said any longer Tophet and Ben-Hinnom, but the valley of killing, and they will bury in Tophet more than there is room.

33 And the dead bodies of this people will become food for the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth and no one will frighten them [away].

34 And I will make the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem observe Sabbath, a sound of joy and a sound of pleasure, the sound of bridegroom and the sound of bride.

9 a direct quote from Deuteronomy 28:26.

10 Most tragic irony. “According to Josephus (J.W. 6.5.3 §§300), during the Feast of Tabernacles in the year A.D. 62 “one Jesus son of Ananias, an untrained peasant” stood in the temple precincts and “suddenly began to cry out, ‘A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people.’ ” Jesus’ words are based on Jeremiah 7:34: “I will bring to an end the sound of mirth and gladness, the voice of the bride and bridegroom in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for the land shall become a waste.” The citizens of Jerusalem were incensed, especially those of the upper class. Jesus was seized and beaten but still continued his plaintive cry. Finally, the “rulers” (by which Josephus probably means ruling priests) brought Jesus before the Roman governor Albinus, who questioned and flogged the prophet of doom. Convinced that the man was a harmless lunatic, the governor released him (see Roman Governors of Palestine). Jesus ben Ananias continued his gloomy ministry for seven years, especially crying out during the feasts, until he was struck and killed by a Roman siege stone in A.D. 69, less than a year before the city was captured and destroyed (see Destruction of Jerusalem). There are several important parallels between the temple-related experiences of Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus son of Ananias. Both entered the precincts of the temple (to hieron: Mk 11:11, 15, 27; 12:35; 13:1; 14:49; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §301) at the time of a religious festival (heortē: Mk 14:2; 15:6; Jn 2:23; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §300). Both spoke of the doom of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41–44; 21:20–24; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §301), the sanctuary (naos: Mk 13:2; 14:58; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §301) and the people (laos: Mk 13:17; Lk 19:44; 23:28–31; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §301). Both apparently alluded to Jeremiah 7, where the prophet condemned the temple establishment of his day (“cave of robbers”: Jer 7:11 in Mk 11:17; “the voice against the bridegroom and the bride”: Jer 7:34 in Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §301). Both were “arrested” by the authority of Jewish (Horsley, 451)—not Roman—leaders (syllambanei: Mk 14:48; Jn 18:12; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §302). Both were beaten by the Jewish authorities (paiein: Mt 26:68; Mk 14:65; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §302). Both were handed over to the Roman governor (ēgagon auton epi ton Pilato: Lk 23:1; anagousin … epi ton … eparcho: Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §303). Both were interrogated by the Roman governor (eperēta: Mk 15:4; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §305). Both refused to answer the governor (ouden apokrinesthai: Mk 15:5; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §305). Both were scourged by the governor (mastigoun/masti: Jn 19:1; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §304). Pilate apparently offered to release Jesus of Nazareth but did not; Albinus did release Jesus son of Ananias (apolyein: Mk 15:9; Josephus J.W. 6.5.3 §305). The experience of Jesus ben Ananias provides independent corroboration for the juridical process described in the NT Gospels. It also reveals how little tolerated were appeals to Jeremiah 7 and talk of judgment upon the temple. The initial reaction of Jewish and Roman authorities to Jesus of Nazareth is scarcely different from their reaction to Jesus son of Ananias.
8:1 In that time – utterance of Yahweh! –
the bones of the kings of Judah will be brought out,
along with the bones of the princes
and the bones of the priests
and the bones of the prophets
and the bones of those dwelling in Jerusalem,
from their graves,
2 and they will expose them
to the sun
and to the moon
and to all the armies of the heavens
which they loved
and which they served
and which they went after
and which they sought
and to whom they worshiped;
    they will not be gathered
    and they will not be buried;
    they will be as refuse upon the face of the ground.
3 And death will be chosen rather than life by all the remnant, 11
    the remnant from this evil people
    in all the places which they are caused to remain,
    wherever they are scattered
– utterance of Yahweh of armies!

Had Albinus found the son of Ananias sane and dangerous, in all probability he would have had him executed as well. But in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, who entertained messianic ideas and spoke of a new kingdom, who had a following, who challenged the polity of the chief priests and who evidently was found sane and dangerous, execution was deemed expedient.” Craig A. Evans, “Jesus Ben Ananias,” ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000).

Table 7: Jeremiah 8:3-9:26

| Yahweh | 8:4 And you will say to them,  
|        |   “Thus said Yahweh,  
|        |   ‘Did they not fall and not get up?  
|        |   Will he return and not return?  
|        |   5 Why was this people Jerusalem not made to return?  
|        |   She is continuing to hold tightly to backsliding in the delusion;  
|        |   they are refusing to return.  
|        |   6 I made myself listen and I heard,  
|        |   but they will not speak thus;  
|        |   no man is repenting on account of evil, saying, ‘What have I done?’  
|        |   all of them are returning to me  
|        |   in their running as a stallion overflowing in war.  
|        |   7 Even a stork in the heavens knows her appointed times,  
|        |   and a turtledove, and a swift and a song-bird, they keep a season of their going,  
|        |   but my people are not knowing the judgment of Yahweh.  
|        |   8 How can you say, ‘We are wise and the law of Yahweh is with us’?  
|        |   Surely, behold, to the deception he made the pen of the deception of the scribes.  
|        |   9 The wise were ashamed;  
|        |   they were humiliated and captured; |

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1 “Possession of the word of God was no substitute for responding to what that word said…” Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, 229.

2 Is this a sober theological statement of the sovereignty of God, or, what seems more likely to me, an ironic rhetorical flourish?

"The cultic officials in Jerusalem maintained that they were wise (hakam) and that the law of Yahweh was with them. Such a claim was made in the face of men like Jeremiah who brought another word from the Lord, which they rejected. The law of Yahweh, which was in their possession and which they claimed to be the legitimate interpreters, was no doubt some written law, possibly a form of the book of Deuteronomy or some form of the ancient covenant law, which seems to have been the book found in the Temple (2 Kings 22:8-13). But perhaps other bodies of written law were in existence. Their confidence in the written page prevented them from accepting the word of Yahweh spoken through the prophet. The reference to scribes (soper) is of particular interest. This is the first reference in the OT to scribes as a special class. According to 1 Chronicles 2:55 these seem to have been organized on the basis of families or guilds. They were active in the time of Josiah, according to 2 Chronicles 34:13. However, they may have been active at a much earlier date. How otherwise could the official records of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah have been And how could the Torah, or such parts of it as existed at the time, have been written? It would seem from the present first that the scribes already had some kind of teaching function, since there deceiving pen (‘et seqer) had turned the law of God into a falsehood (lasseqer)." Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 299–300.
behold, against the word of Yahweh they despised,
and what wisdom belongs to them?

10 Therefore,
I am giving their wives to others,
their fields to those who are dispossessing [them],
because from small to great,
all are getting ill-gotten gain;
from prophet to priest all are making deception.

11 For they healed the wound of the house of my people
on account of her being made light of,
saying, “Peace, peace,” and there was no peace.3

12 They were ashamed because they made idols –
they were certainly not even ashamed,
and being disgraced they did not know [it];
therefore, they will fall among the fallen;
in the time of their visitation they will stumble.

Word of Yahweh.4

13 I will surely gather them.
Utterance of Yahweh!
There are no grapes on the vine,
and there are no figs in the figs [trees]
and the leaves withered,
and I gave to them – they overstepped.5

14 Why are we inhabiting?
Be gathered together,
and let us go to the fortified cities

3 “…prior to the Galatian crisis Paul understood himself as a prophet and that he did not adopt this
vocabulary ad hoc to deal with the problem he faced in the churches of Galatia. His language in 1
Thessalonians, which is probably his earliest extant letter, suggests that Paul’s prophetic self-understanding
originated with his apostolic calling. His expression of sincerity (1 Thess 2:4: “even as we have been tested
by God … to please God who tests our hearts”) echoes the words of Jeremiah (LXX Jer 11:20: “Lord, who
judges justly, testing the reins and the hearts …”). Both Paul and Jeremiah uttered these words in the face
of opposition (cf. 1 Thess 2:2 with Jer 11:19). Later Paul again takes up the theme of persecution (1 Thess
3:4: “For when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has
come to pass”; cf. 2 Cor 11:23–27), which recalls the tradition of the suffering and persecuted prophet (cf.
prophet ever came forth to them whom they did not wish to slay?’ ”). Paul’s eschatological warning (1
Thess 5:3: “When people say, ‘There is peace and safety,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as
travail comes upon a woman with child”) echoes similar solemn warnings found in the OT prophets (cf. Jer
6:14, 24; 8:11; 14:13–14; Ezek 13:10, 16; Hos 14:1…” Craig A. Evans, “Prophet, Paul As,” ed. Gerald
F Hawthorne, Ralph P Martin, and Daniel G Reid, Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (Downers Grove, Ill:
InterVarsity Press, 1993).”

4 “…8:10b–12 repeats the refrain of 6:13–15…” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible

5 “…8:13 returns to the metaphor of the vineyard (2:21; 5:10–11; 6:9).” Ibid.
and let us be silent there,
for Yahweh our God silenced us
and made us drink waters of poison,
for we sinned against Yahweh,
15 hoping for peace,
but nothing [was] good,
for a season of health,
and behold, terror!
16 From Dan⁶ is heard the snorting of his horses,

⁶ “Dan lay at the most northerly limit of Israel near the headwaters of the Jordan (1 Kings 4:25). Armies coming from the east would dissent from the hills above the Jordan (the modern Golan Heights) not far from Dan, so that Dan would be the first town to announce the arrival of an enemy force. In recent years the site of Dan has been excavated. Among other important finds was evidence for some kind of sanctuary with an altar (cf. 1 Kings 12:29; 2 Kings 10:29; Amos 8:14).” Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 302–303.

“Said R. Yohanan, “When that righteous man came to Dan, he grew weak. He foresaw that the children of his children were destined to commit acts of idolatry in Dan, as it is said, ‘And he set the one in Beth El, and the other he put in Dan’ (1Ki. 12:29). And also that wicked man Nebuchadnezzar did not grow strong until he reached Dan, as it is said, ‘From Dan the snorting of his horses was heard’ (Jer. 8:16).’” Jacob Neusner, “Sanhedrin,” in *Babylonian Talmud*, vol. 16, ch. 12S, CD-ROM (Rio, WI: Ages Library, 2006), sec. 1.75.

“… Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, 99. Caird notes that according to Irenaeus, John substituted Manasseh for Dan because Dan was the tribe from which the Antichrist was expected to come, according to Jeremiah 8:16. Rabbinic interpretation would agree with the negative assessment of Dan, since the town of Dan was one of the places where Jeroboam set up his idolatrous calves (1 Kings 12:29). In the Testament of Dan 5:6, Satan is represented as the tribe's prince…” O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Pub, 2000), 156n 52. Robertson disagrees with this interpretation, but there is a certain sense to be made of it, with Dan as one of the apostate tribes.

"In Irenaeus's eschatology, the Jews play no role (see above). The only statement made about the Antichrist is that he will come from the tribe of Dan (on the basis of Jeremiah 8:16). [Note: in Irenaeus shows that this tribe does not belong to those will be saved (Against Heresies 5.30.2; cf. Hippolytus, Antichrist 14f.). W Bousset, the Antichrist legend (London: Hutchinson, 1896) 113: this is quite an old idea, which is probably already present in revelation 7, based on such traditions as judges 11ff.; Cf Testament of Dan 5:6f.; Cf. J Becker, "Die Testamente der zwolf Patriarchen," in Judische Schriften 3/1:350n. 3…]." Hans Conzelmann, *Gentiles, Jews, Christians: Polemics and Apologetics in the Greco-Roman Era*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 334.

“Irenaeus (ca. A. D. 200) surmised that the Antichrist would be a Jew. He believed that the mention of Dan in Jeremiah 8:16 and the omission of the name of Dan in the list of tribes found in Revelation 7 indicated the Antichrist’s tribe. Though Irenaeus did not explain further why he believed that the Antichrist would come from the tribe of Dan, it is true that the Midrash on Genesis 49:14–17 declared that from Dan would be darkness and evil. Dan was also the first of Israel’s tribes to accept idolatry. In addition, the tribal insignia of Dan actually bore the sign of a serpent and the serpent was accepted as a sign of Antichrist. These may have been the things that influenced Irenaeus’ interpretation.” Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), pt. 211.
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<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>17 For behold, I am sending among you snakes, vipers,⁷ for which you have no magician, and they will bite you. Utterance of Yahweh!</td>
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<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>18 My comforter is against me, sorrow is against me, my heart is faint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yahweh-Jeremiah</td>
<td>19 Behold, a sound of a cry for help of the daughter of my people from distant places, “Yahweh, are you not in Zion?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>If her king is not in her why have they angered me by their idols, by foreign vanities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁷“In Isaiah’s prophecy of the messianic age to come, among the symbols of reconciled nature, along with the wolf which dwells peaceably with the lamb, he predicts that “the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den” (Isa. 11:8). In Jer. 8:17 the cockatrice is a symbol of judgment which comes from “the serpent’s root,” and its “fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.” The Heb. ṣēpā’ (cockatrice, adder, viper, asp) is sometimes called a “basilisk.” A legendary beast in medieval times, it was believed to be hatched by a serpent from a cock’s egg; it had the head, legs, and wings of a cock but a serpent’s tail, an arrow-headed tongue, poisonous breath, and eyes which could slay at a glance. It is this creature, the “basilisk” rather than the biblical ṣēpā’, which is implicated in Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night when Sir Toby Belch plans to set Sir Andrew and Cesario (Viola in disguise) against each other: “This,” says Sir Toby, “will so fright them both that they will kill one another by the look, like cockatrices” (3.4.199-201; cf. Richard 3, 4.1.54-55; Romeo and Juliet, 3.2.45-47). The same creature, and not any specific biblical allusion, is intended by Donne in “Elegie IV,” where he describes his lover’s disapproving father searching “with glazed eyes, / As though he came to kill a Cockatrice.” The Jeremiah reference is evidently in the mind of George Herbert, however, in “Sinnen round,” in which the poet repents (“Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am”...grant imagination: My thoughts are working like a busie flame, Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring: And when they once have perfected their draughts, My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.”” David L Jeffrey, ed., “Cockatrice,” A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeremiah</th>
<th>Yahweh-Jeremiah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 20 The harvest has passed over,  
the summer fruit is finished,  
and we are not saved. |
| 21 Because of the wound of the daughter of my people  
I am broken,  
I am darkened,  
horror has me bound.  
22 Is there no balm in Gilead?  
If there is no healing there –  
for what reason did healing for the daughter of my people not go up? |
| 23 Who will give my head water,  
and my eyes a flow of tears?  
Then I would weep day and night for the dead of the house of my people.8 |
| 9:1 Who will give me a night-lodging for travelers in the desert?  
Then I would abandon my people  
and go away from them,  
for all of them are committing adultery,  
an assembly of the unfaithful.  
2 For they are sending out their tongues as bows of destruction,  
and they are not contending for faithfulness in the land,  

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8 “… With Jeremiah the case is different (in VIII.18-23); for, as well as predictions, there are a great many passages which deal exclusively with the present, and which are particularly characteristic of this prophet…. It is impossible to classify this passage under any specific literary category. There are certainly echoes of community lament and if something like an answer from Yahweh (verse 19); but these are perceived only, as it were, from the outside; whereas the very first sentence places us inside Jeremiah's thought, and this is where all the essential action takes place. Here, first, is the realization of the calamity overtaking the land; the prophet looks for deliverance; that becomes clear to him that all is lost; and he finally expresses the wish that he could we got his eyes and tears of grief. This is the "event" of which we are told! How far is this prophetic proclamation? Versus sees in fact come very close to being what we describe as free lyric poetry. This again shows us that Jeremiah is much more keenly inflamed, and in an entirely novel way, by a poetic impulse which exists quite independently from prophecy. It also raises the question of how we are to evaluate this remarkably large increase of the element of pure poetry. The answer might, of course, be that the essential element of prophecy in Jeremiah was weakened by his yielding to the poetic impulse: it could also be that this apparently escaped his words understrength. Those who took the view that these passages marked the first appearance of a free, personal ego and that Jeremiah is the father of free, personal prayer, found his question relatively simple; and there is, of course, an element of truth in their theory. But it is very doubtful whether it does justice to the special character of these passages. Because of the special nature of God's relationship with Israel, and particularly with Jeremiah, it is probable a priori that the specific form of these passages and their message can only be understood in the light of their specific preconditions." von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:200–201.

“...To a great extent the enormous passion of Jeremiah's ministry arose from his deep involvement with the very people he was commissioned to judge. Jeremiah is portrayed as a watchman who announces the approach of the destroying hordes, but at the same time he is overwhelmed with the effect of his words…” Childs, Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments, 127.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh-People</th>
<th>Jeremiah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for from evil to evil they are going, and they do not know me. Utterance of Yahweh! 3 They must each beware of their neighbors and they cannot trust in every brother, for every brother is surely taking advantage and slander goes around every neighbor, 4 and each one is being deceived by their neighbors; they do not speak truth, their tongues learn to speak destruction; doing wrong, they are disabled. 5 Your inhabiting is in the midst of deceit in deceit; they refuse the knowledge of me. Utterance of Yahweh! 6 Therefore, thus says Yahweh of armies, “Behold, I am refining and testing them, for what will I make you before me, daughter of my people?” 7 A destroying arrow are their lips of deceit; he spoke peace by his mouth; with his neighbor he spoke and in his inner parts harbored ambush. 8 Why, on account of these things, should I not visit [judgment] among them? Utterance of Yahweh! If, in a nation there are such as this [shall] my soul not be avenged? 9 Upon the mountains I will lift up weeping and wailing and upon the pastures of the desert a lament, for they are set ablaze;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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9 יַעֲקֹב. "As in so many matters, the prophet Jeremiah echoes many motifs found first with Hosea, who undoubtedly, in some fashion, was his spiritual teacher. And so it is not surprising to find another instance of the strong diatribe against Israel phrased technologically around the old language of the Pentateuch traditions. Thus, and Jeremiah 9:3-5 numerous key terms are adapted from the Jacob Cycle to stress that the new Israel is like the old – filled with mendacity and duplicity in interpersonal relationships... In the strong terms the prophet Jeremiah implies that contemporary Israel – like Israel of old – is deceitful and perverts the trust upon which all human intercourse depends. Playing on the terms known from the trot attempt the prophet subtly de-historicizes the historical Jacob-Israel, and revises him in accordance with the contemporary same. Forehand, the misdeeds and deceptions of the past are renewed in the misdeeds of Jacob's descendents. As with the typology in Hosea 12, here to the diatribe nationalizes the old tradition and gives a covenental dimensions [sic]. No neutral correlations drawn; rather, Israel, like Jacob, is a deceitful supplanter: his past is their presence; their deceptions reiterate ancient patterns. As with other examples of typology, a covert thread within history is made manifest. The new is like the old." Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 378–379.  

10 Interrogative supplied from beginning of verse.
Yahweh

no one crosses over [it],
and they do not hear the sound of livestock,
from a bird of the heaven to a beast,
they fled,
they went.

10 And I gave Jerusalem to be a dwelling place of stones, of jackals,
and the cities of Judah I gave desolation,
with no one dwelling.

11 Who is the wise man, and he can understand this,
and what the mouth of Yahweh said to him?
And let it be told why the land perished,
made to lie in ruins as a desert,
without anyone crossing [it].

12 And Yahweh said,
"On account of their abandoning my law to be before them;
but they did not listen to my voice
and they did not walk in it.

13 And they went after the stubbornness of their hearts
and after the lords which their fathers learned.

14 Therefore, thus says Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,
“Behold, I am causing this people
to be consumed to bitterness
and to drink waters of poison.

15 And they will be scattered among the nations
which they and their fathers did not know,11
and I will send the sword after them until I finish them.

Wailing-women

16 Thus says Yahweh, Lord of armies,
“Understand and call to the lamenting-women and let them come,12
and to the wise women, send and let them come,

17 and hasten and lift up wailing on our account,
and let tears fall down our eyes
and our eyelashes flow with water.

18 For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion;

11 “... The first commandment is not an axiom; on the contrary, it is Yahweh himself approves that he is the only God; and he does this through his deeds in history – 'I am Yahweh who brought you out of the land of Egypt.' In actual fact, quite often all that is said of the alien gods is that they have no historical connection with Israel – the patriarchs did not 'know' them, they were not acquainted with them (Deuteronomy XIII.7 [6], XXVIII.64; Jeremiah IX.15 [14], XVI.13, XIX.4). They are 'newcomers' (דֵּשֶׁם מְכָרָב), an objection to them which is most characteristic of Israel's faith and its way of thinking about history. Yahweh is the God of Israel from of old (Psalms XLIV.2 [1], LXXIV.2, 12).” von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, 1:210.

12 “The official task of the keeners was to begin the public rituals of mourning for funeral rites (O’Connor 1992). Their presence indicates that a death has occurred.” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 9:17.
The complaint of Yahweh is that the land can now be cast off and the people abandoned, since Israel abandoned the land and was not sent from their tents (Jeremiah 19:13). The women and daughters wail and lament their neighbors, as death has ascended in their windows to kill a child outside and young men from the public square (Jeremiah 19:20). The corpse of the man will fall like refuse upon the face of the field and as a stalk of grain after the harvester, and no one is gathering (Jeremiah 19:21).

19 For hear, women, the word of Yahweh, and take [in] your ears the word of his mouth and learn; your daughters [are] wailing and a woman laments her neighbor.

20 For death has ascended in your windows; it went in your citadels to cut off a child outside, young men from the public square.

21 Speak thus! Utterance of Yahweh!

And the corpse of the man will fall like refuse upon the face of the field and as a stalk of grain after the harvester, and no one is gathering.

22 Thus said Yahweh, “Let not the wise man rejoice in his wisdom, and let not the victor rejoice in his victory; let not the rich rejoice in his riches.

23 Only in this let the one rejoicing rejoice: having insight into and knowing me, for I, Yahweh, am doing lovingkindness, judgment and..."
righteousness in the land, 
for in these I delight. 
Utterance of Yahweh!
24 Behold days are coming. 
Utterance of Yahweh!
And I will visit [judgment] upon all those circumcised in foreskins,14 
25 upon Egypt and upon Judah and upon Edom and upon Ammon 
and upon Moab, 
and upon all those cutting off the corners, 
those dwelling in the desert, 
for all the nations are uncircumcised 
and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.15


15 “Heb ˓ārēl also has a figurative meaning, “unclean” or “forbidden,” as in Lev. 19:23; “When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden [˓ārēl; AV, lit, “uncircumcised”]; three years it shall be forbidden to you, it must not be eaten.” In Ex. 6:12, 30 Moses describes himself as a person of “uncircumcised lips,” indicating his difficulty in making people listen to him. In Dt. 10:16 and Jer. 4:4 God’s people are urged to remove the “foreskin” (˓orlä) of their hearts in order to be acceptable to God. In Lev. 26:41 they are instructed to humble their “uncircumcised” heart and make amends for their iniquity so that God will remember the covenant. Jer. 6:10 states that the people will not hear the warnings of destruction because their ears are “uncircumcised” ˓ārēl; RSV “closed”). Jer. 9:25f (MT 24f) warns that because Israel and other nations who are physically circumcised do not have uncircumcised hearts, they will be destroyed. In the NT Paul wrestles with the distinction between the “circumcised” and the “uncircumcised,” contrasting the external fact of circumcision with the internal spirit. He states “Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision . . . . For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal” (Rom. 2:25, 28f). Elsewhere Paul affirms that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (in the physical, outward sense) is of significance (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:15). Paul’s use of “uncircumcision” in a spiritual sense is clearly similar to the figurative use in the OT. The same figurative sense appears also in Stephen’s speech: “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51).” A. Hickcox, “Uncircumcised; Uncircumcision,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979).
| Jeremiah | 1 “Hear the word which Yahweh spoke to you, house of Israel:  
   2 ‘Thus said Yahweh,  
   “According to the way of the nations you shall not learn and from the signs of the heavens you shall not be dismayed,  
   for the nations will be dismayed more than them.  
   3 For the regulations of the peoples – they are vanity!  
     For they cut a tree from the forest,  
     a work of the hands of skilled craftsmen by their tools.  
     4 By silver and gold they become beautiful, with hammer and nails they strengthen it, so they do not shake.  
     5 They are as scarecrows from a cucumber patch, and they do not speak, they must surely be lifted, for they do not march.  
   Do not be afraid of them, |

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1 Note 3 refers to the word of the Lord in a short space. “Although this verse is short, it contains unnecessary repetition. In fact, “Thus says the LORD” in verse 2 adds to the repetition…” Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 271.

2 “The celestial gods (sun god, moon god and Venus particularly; in Babylonia, Shamash, Sin and Ishtar respectively) were primary in most ancient religions. Controlling calendar and time, seasons and weather, they were viewed as the most powerful of gods. They provided signs by which omens were read, and they looked down on all. By the end of the second millennium, a major compilation of celestial omens, the seventy tablets of the work known as Enuma Anu Enlil, had been compiled and was consulted for nearly a thousand years.” Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, bk. Jer 10:2.

3 יִנָּשׂ֖וּ. The same root used for “to forgive.”

4 “Myth, just because it is myth, is a way of thinking by means of symbols and images: but Israel fought with all the resolve she could command against the most important thing in all the mythic symbols which are religious environment offered her, namely, their capacity to serve as means of revelation. This awareness of the barrier which men erect between themselves and God by means of images is, however, Israel's greatest achievement. This, and this alone, her insight into idolatry and myth, furnish the key to her loneliness in the company of the religions of the world. She was not, of course, in the exalted position of knowing better than they did. Over a long period of time she had enough to do to extricate herself from the temptation to idolatry and image-worship. We find even the prophet still engaged on the task of smashing to bits their nation's graven image of a national God who offered protection and bestowed the blessings of nature, because they knew that Israel was finished she put her trust in ‘worthless God.' Once the struggle was over, however, she occasionally even burst into laughter at this eager fashioning of idols and at the nations dancing before the work of their own hands (Isaiah XLIV.9ff.; Jeremiah X.1ff).” von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, 2:340.
| Jeremiah? People? Heavenly chorus? | for they do wickedly and, moreover, there is no doing good with them.””’
6 No one is as you are, Yahweh; great are you and great is your name in power.
7 Who will not fear you, King of the nations, for to you it is fitting; for among all the wise of the nations and among all the kingdoms there is none like you.
8 “And at once they will become senseless and foolish, a discipline of vanities. It is wood!
9 Beaten silver from Tarshish will be brought and gold from Uphaz, a work of skilled craftsmen, and hands refining blue and purple clothing, all of them a workmanship of wise people.
10 But Yahweh, God of truth.

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5 “This is what R. Yohanan said, ‘There is one thing that brings a burning to the wicked in Gehenna, and what is that? It is idolatry. Here it is written, “the vanities by which they are instructed are nothing but a piece of wood,” and elsewhere: “They are a vanity, a work of delusion” (Jer. 10:15).’” Rabbi Judah the Prince. et. al., Babylonian Talmud, trans. Jacob Neusner, CD-ROM (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 2006), vols. 7, ch.1, p.16.

6 “An otherwise unknown location where gold was obtained (Jer. 10:9; Dan. 10:5). However, the Hebrew text is uncertain in both references. Many scholars, following some ancient versions (Targums, Syriac, Heb. manuscripts), take Uphaz as a scribal error for Ophir, a near legendary source of gold (cf. 1 Kings 9:28). Other scholars have suggested that Uphaz is a misspelled form of the word ‘refine’ (Heb. רָפָה) and should be translated ‘pure’ or ‘finest’ (cf. 1 Kings 10:18; Song of Sol. 5:11).” Dennis R. Bratcher, “Uphaz,” ed. Paul J Achtemeier, Harper’s Bible Dictionary (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985).

7 “Even references as late as Jeremiah X.9; Isaiah XL.20; Ezekiel XXVIII.8; Exodus XXXI.6 (P) use the adjective in that technical sense of experienced, expert, skilled.” von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, 1:418n. But this may rather be an ironic use of the term, opposing these foolish creators to the wisdom of God in creation reflected also in this passage.

8 Or “Yahweh is a God of truth [=true God]”. The employment of a substantive as predicate of a noun-clause is especially frequent, either when no corresponding adjective exists (so mostly with words expressing the material; cf. § 128 o) or when the attribute is intended to receive a certain emphasis. For in all cases there is a much greater stress upon a substantival predicate,2 since it represents something as identical with the subject (see above, b [a]), than upon an adjectival or verbal predicate; cf. Ct 1:10; Ps 25:10 all the paths of the Lord are רְחֵבָה lovingkindness and truth (i.e. wholly lovingkindness, &c.; cf. 294
| Yahweh | he is the living God and an eternal King, from his wrath the earth shakes and the nations cannot sustain his wrath.” |
| Jeremiah? People? Heavenly chorus? | 11 Like this you shall say to them, ‘The God who is in the sky and the ground they did not serve; these are they who perish from the ground and from the earth, the skies.’” |
| | 12 He who made Earth by his strength, who formed the world in his wisdom and by his understanding; he spread out the heavens. |
| | 13 To the sound of his giving is a wealth of waters in the heavens, and the storm clouds were lifted up from the end of the earth, lightnings made the rain and the wind from his treasuries was brought out.” |
| | 14 All humanity was brutalized; from knowledge all the refiners dried up, for his idols are a lie and breath is not in them. |
| | 15 They are vanity, a work of mockeries; in the time of their visitation they will perish.” |

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10 “In the particular case of the participial attribute of a pronoun or of a determinate noun (expressed or understood), the article is often omitted in poetry: Is 44.24b יְזַכְּרֵנָהוּוּ (… but 26b ff. יְזַכְּרֵנָהוּוּ); Ps 104.2, 4 (but vs. 3 with the article!); 135.7; Jr 10.12 (continuation of vs. 10).” Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (rev.), sec. 138e.

| Jeremiah to the people | 16 Not as these is the portion of Jacob, for he is forming everything; and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance, Yahweh of Armies is his name.¹³ |
| Jeremiah’s personal lament | 17 Gather your belongings from the land, you who are dwelling in the siege works. 18 For thus said Yahweh, “Behold, I am hurling those who are dwelling in the land in this conduct of life, and I will cause them to be wrapped up, because they have been discovered.” |
| | 19 Woe is mine on account of my wound; my injury weakens me, and I, I will say,¹⁴ ‘Surely, this is my illness, and I must lift it.’ 20 My tents are devastated and all my cords are pulled off; my sons left me and none of them, none are spreading out my tent anymore nor are my tent curtains being raised. 21 For the shepherds have been made senseless, and Yahweh they do not seek; |

¹² “Whereas syncretism and idolatry were always part of Israel’s struggle in the land, idolatry was a particular temptation for the assimilating community in Babylon.” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Je 10:1.

¹³ “These verses contain a hymn presented as prophetic word (vv. 1, 11), the subject of which is the foolishness of worshipping other gods and the loyalty of the speakers to YHWH the true God. This liturgical song, a many-voiced choir of witnesses (Seybold 1993) perplexes interpreters on a number of grounds (Margaliot 1980; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard 1991: 157–61). v. 11 is in Aramaic; the order of the MT differs from the LXX, and the poem’s themes of loyal monotheism intrude abruptly upon poems of accusation and weeping in the previous chapters. The order of the MT passage, however, makes sense as it stands (Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard 1991; Thompson 1980: 325), and, of greater interest, the sentiments of this hymn, loyal monotheism and derision of idols, as well as its liturgical style, evoke the voice of the repentant children in 3:21–5. It may be placed after the injunction to the people to weep for their imminent death (9:1–22) so as to serve as a model of repentance and reconciliation for the exilic survivors of that death. The exiles are brought into the text as the voice of the community that has been refined in the fire, and they are provided with language to reconcile them with the one true God. The hymn’s location in the book transposes exilic conflict from the historical world to the divine. The gods of the nations are powerless and ridiculous, and so they and their people will be punished and perish (v. 15). Only the Creator God of Israel can give life, and by implication provide the community with a future.” Ibid.

¹⁴ “The convention at work is in fact the same that is at the heart of all autobiographical genres, pure and mixed. The convention is one in which the title of the work itself bears the name of the principal persona, a persona whose first-person perspective, once again, dominates the work as a whole. It is by this convention that we identify the ‘I said’ statements in Qoheleth as belonging to Qoheleth. So it is in the books of Isaiah (6:5ff.; 22:4; 24:16), Ezekiel (4:14; etc.), Amos (7:2–5), and Micah (3:1). So it must also be in Jeremiah 10:19b (as also in 1:6ff.; 4:10; 5:4; 11:5; 14:13; 20:9; and 24:3). The voice intruding upon Jerusalem’s complaint is Jeremiah’s own.” Timothy Polk, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 32 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 73.
| Jeremiah to Yahweh | therefore, they will not teach, and all their flocks are scattered.  
22. Behold, a sound, a rumor is coming, and a great earthquake from the land of the North to place in the cities of Judah a desolation, a dwelling place of jackals.  
23 I know, Yahweh, that a person's way is not his; going and forming his own steps\textsuperscript{15} does not belong to him.  
24 Correct me, Yahweh, only in justice, not in your anger, lest I be diminished.  
25 Pour out your venom upon the nations who do not know you\textsuperscript{16} and on the peoples who do not call on your name, for they are consuming Jacob, and they consumed him\textsuperscript{17} and they finished him, and their pastures were devastated.\textsuperscript{18} |


\textsuperscript{17} “This verse is almost equivalent with Psa 79:6–7. The main difference between the two passages is that the psalm does not include the verb phrase have devourled him, which is also absent from some Hebrew manuscripts and from the Septuagint as well for this verse. HOTTP, however, believes it to have been an original part of the Jeremiah passage. It is retained in most translations, though REB omits it with a footnote.” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 291–292.

\textsuperscript{18} “We are brought back dramatically to the temporal threshold of exile through the voices of at least two speakers. YHWH (vv. 17–18 and probably in v. 22) announces the exile and the siege. Daughter Zion (vv. 19–21 and probably vv. 23–5) comments on the personal significance of the disaster for her and pleads for justice. YHWH’s commanding voice (vv. 17–18) orders the people to pick up their bundles; the siege has begun. YHWH will ‘fling away the inhabitants of the land’ with relish, indeed, with vindictiveness, ‘so that they shall feel it’. vv. 19–21, in terminology of ‘hurt’ and ‘wound’ that makes her a figure of sympathy rather than scorn, Daughter Zion laments her fate (see Isa 54:1–3). She has no one to help expand her tent and no need to do so for she is bereft of children (v. 20). Her leaders have wounded her; her people are scattered (v. 21). She sees at last what faces her and humbly acknowledges the severity of her wound. Exile is a punishment she must bear. From her own words we learn again that YHWH is not the cause of the tragedy (v. 19). If the female character here is YHWH’s divorced wife of 2:1–4:2, she has undergone a transformation from a silent, unreconciled cast-off to a repentant and long-suffering figure of lament, deprived of her children. But the cosmic battle approaches anyway: ‘Hear’, the noise of battle comes from the north (v. 22). Daughter Zion appears to speak again in vv. 24–5, although Holladay (1986: 297}
identifies the speaker as the people rather than as the personified city, and Brueggemann (1988: 103) thinks the speaker is Jeremiah. The speaker prays that God punish in ‘just measure’ and not in anger (cf. 10:19b). She begs, instead, for YHWH to pour anger on the nations that have laid waste and devoured Jacob (vv. 24–5). Clearly speaking from exile, this voice echoes the repentance themes of 3:21–5 and 10:1–16. Exile is punishment that must be borne, but YHWH, God of all nations, may, in turn, punish those who have devastated Israel, if Israel repents.” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Je 10:17.
Table 9: Jeremiah 13

| Jeremiah 13:1 | Thus said Yahweh to me,  
| “While you are going [about]  
| acquire for yourself a linen loincloth  
| and you will place it upon your waist¹  
| and you will not bring it to water.”²  
| 2 | So I acquired the loincloth,  
| according to the word of Yahweh,  
| and I placed it upon my waist.  
| 3 | and the word of Yahweh came to pass to me a second time, saying,  
| 4 | “Take the loincloth which you acquired,  
| which is upon your waist  
| and get yourself up to the Euphrates,”³  


² i.e. wash it.

³ “The first is the difficulty in determining the event’s location and historical status. Because the Euphrates is a great distance away from Jerusalem, it becomes hard to imagine Jeremiah actually performing the act. Some interpreters, therefore, emend the text to name a site near Jerusalem or understand the narrative as entirely fictional. The problems are unresolvable (Condamin 1920: 114–17; Holladay 1986: 396; Carroll 1986).” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 13:1. Note also Jeremiah’s forced exile to Egypt (Jer. 43), where there is also an act of symbolic hiding (43:8-10). “But no doubt a vision is here narrated, and not a real transaction, as some think, who regard Jeremiah as having gone there; but what can be imagined more absurd? He was, we know, continually engaged in his office of a teacher among his own people. Had he undertaken so long a journey, and that twice, it would have taken him some months. Hence contentious must he be, who urges the words of the Prophet, and holds that he must have gone to the Euphrates and hidden there his girdle. We know that this form of speaking is common and often used by the prophets: they narrate visions as facts.” Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries, bk. Jer 13:1. “The Prophet, by saying that he went to the Euphrates, confirms what he had narrated: he did not indeed mean that he actually went there, but his object was to give the Jews a vivid representation. It is then what Rhetorians call a scene presented to the view; though the place is not changed, yet the thing is set before the eyes by a lively description. [Note: ‘Many agree with Calvin that this was a vision and not an actual transaction, such as Gataker, Lowth, Blayney, Adara Clarke, &c. Henry hesitates, but Scott seems to be strongly in favor of a real transaction. Bochart and Venema hold also the latter opinion, only they think that פרת here does not mean “Euphrates,” but Ephrata, that is, Bethlehem, in Judea; but this cannot be maintained. Lowth refers to an instance where a vision is related as a fact, without any mention being made that it was a vision, that is, Genesis 15:5: God brought Abraham forth and shewed to him the stars; and yet it appears from Jeremiah 13:12 that the sun was not set. Blayney remarks, that “the same supposition of a vision must be admitted in other cases, particularly Jeremiah 25:15–29.” Gataker refers to similar instances in Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 11:24. It was most probably a vision; and the Prophet
and hide it there in a crevice of the cliff.”

5 And I went and I hid it in the Euphrates according to the command of Yahweh to me.

6 And it came to pass after many days that Yahweh said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates and take from there the loincloth which I commanded you to hide there.”

7 And I went to the Euphrates and I dug and I took the loincloth from the place where I hid it there, and, behold, it was destroyed; the loincloth did not succeed to the extent of its entirety.

8 And the word of Yahweh came to pass to me, saying,

9 “Thus said Yahweh, ‘This is how you will be corrupted, majesty of Judah and majesty of Jerusalem the great!’”

related to the people what God had in a supernatural way exhibited to him. — Ed.’ Thus the Prophet, as the Jews were deaf, exhibited to their view what they would not hear. This is the reason why he says that he went. For the same purpose is what follows, that at the end of many days God had bidden him to take out the girdle. Here also is signified the length of the exile. As to the hole in a rock, what is meant is disgrace; for without honor and esteem the Jews lived in banishment, in the same manner as though they were cast into a cavern. Hence by the whole is signified their ignoble and base condition, that they were like persons removed from the sight of all men and from the common light of day.” Ibid., bk. Jer. 13:1. “In all other biblical occurrences, פְּרָת is the name for the Euphrates River, and refers to such in Jer. 46:2, 6, 10, and 51:63. Although the Euphrates River is usually referred to by the fuller nomenclature of פְּרָת נָהָר on occasion (cf. 2 Chron. 35:20; Jer. 51:63), it is designated only by פְּרָת. So in Jeremiah 13, the specification without נָהָר cannot be decisive in arguing against it being the Euphrates. But in those other two passages, other locational references associated with the term make the addition of ‘river’ unnecessary (2 Chron. 35:20: עַל־פְּרָת בְּכַרְכְּמִ֖ישׁ; Jer. 51:63: located in Babylon in v. 60). Since nothing else in Jeremiah 13 specifically places it in Babylon, the possibility exists that Perat in this passage is another location other than the Euphrates River.” Friebel, *Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts*, 105–106. “A number of translations have the equivalent of “Perath,” “Parath,” or “Parah” (REB, NIV, NAB, MFT, GECL, TOB), which is a stream about five kilometers (three miles) northeast of Anathoth. According to the GECL footnote, this interpretation is followed by one Septuagint tradition, but the Hebrew word may also have this meaning (as in Josh 18:23). The problem is that to travel to the Euphrates River would have involved a round trip of about 1100 kilometers (700 miles). It is felt also that much of the impact of the parable would be lost if the Euphrates is intended, since it is doubtful that anyone in Judah would have been willing to accompany Jeremiah there and back twice. This particular place was probably chosen because in Hebrew its name is identical with that of the Euphrates, and so could possibly be understood symbolically of the Euphrates. Consequently it is our recommendation that translators say “River Perath” or “the small stream Perath,” with a footnote to say that in Hebrew this is close in sound to “River Euphrates.”” Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 327–328.

4 “If Euphrates is the location of the event, then the text suggests that the exiles, symbolized by the loincloth and buried in Babylon, are ruined by the experience.” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, Jer. 13:11.

5 Note the first person singular. This could simply agree with the singular proper nouns of Judah and Jerusalem, but could also refer to Jeremiah, since the speech is directed to him personally.

6 Poetic irony.
| Yahweh | 10 “This evil people,
who are refusing to hear my word,
those who are going in the stubbornness of their hearts,
and they walk after other gods in order to worship them,
then it will come to pass as this loincloth,
which did not succeed in its entirety.

11 For just as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man,
therefore I caused you to cling to me,
all the house of Israel and all the house of Judah.
Utterance of Yahweh!
to become to me
to be a people
and to be a name
and to be a renown
and to be honors –
but they did not hear.

12 And you will say to them this word,
“Thus said Yahweh, God of Israel,
‘Every earthen vessel will be filled with wine,’
and they will say to you,
‘Do we not surely know that every earthen vessel will be filled
with wine?’

13 And you will say to them,
“Thus said Yahweh,
‘Behold, I am filling all who dwell in this land,
both the kings who are dwelling at David [’s place], upon his
throne,\footnote{equivalent to a genitive and attribute of a preceding noun (§ a) must also be compared with ל referring to the verb to indicate to whom the action refers. In that case the ג with its noun (or pronoun) is not equivalent to a genitive, since it refers to the verb and not to the noun; in practice, however, this construction expresses in an indirect way the genitive relationship of possession(3). Examples: Gn 17.12 כּל־זָכָר לָכֶם יִמּוֹל “shall be circumcised to you every male” = all your males shall be circumcised (vs. 10; 34.15, 22; Ex 12.48); Dt 23.3 (verses 4, 9) לֹו יָבֹא לא עֲשִׂירִי לְדָוִד הַיְשִׁבֶ֞ים הַמְּלָכִ֣ים = “the kings [of the house of] David who sit on his throne” (22.4); Gn 50.23; Dt 22.14; 1Sm 2.33; 9.3, 20; 11.2; 25.34; 1Kg 2.4; 14.10, 13; 2Kg 10.30; Is 26.14; 33.14; Jr 48.35; Am 9.1; Ps 128.6; 132.12; Lm 1.10.” Joüon and Muraoka, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.), 447–448.

*The kings who sit on David’s throne are best understood as “the kings, who are David’s descendants” (TEV). The same expression is found in 17:25; 22:2, 4, 30; 29:16; 33:21; 36:30. Translators need to be careful that the translation does not leave the impression that there are some kings of Judah who are descended from David and others who are not, and here only the first group is in view. The expression means “the kings, all of whom are David’s descendants.”” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 332.} and the priests |
and all those dwelling in Jerusalem,
with drunkenness.  
14 And I will shatter them,
from each man to his brother,
both the fathers and sons together.
Utterance of Yahweh!

I will not show mercy
and I will not take pity
and I will not love them
on account of their being corrupted.”

| People | 15 Now listen! Let us not exalt [ourselves] for Yahweh spoke. |
| Jeremiah | 16 Give to Yahweh your God glory
before he makes darkness
and before your feet strike upon the mountains at dusk,
then you will hope for light,
and he will place deep shadow;
he will establish a very thick cloud. |
|  | 17 And if you do not listen to it in the hidden places
my life will weep in the presence of [such] pride,
and you surely will weep,
and my eyes will lower, weeping,
for the herd of Yahweh has been taken captive. |
|  | 18 I will say to the king and to the female warrior, |

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8 “The filling of the wine-jars does not, as expected, symbolize feasting and joy but drunkenness. The people’s forced drunkenness leads to self-destruction of all the land’s inhabitants, particularly royal and religious leadership (v. 13)...It blames the national catastrophe on Judah, but it also places the fall within divine punishment of the nations by leading forward to 25:15–29 where all the nations drink of the same cup of destruction.” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer. 13:12.

9 Or “queen mother”, “Since the kings had many wives, not all with the same status, the identity of the prince’s mother was important in the succession to the throne.” Charles F Pfeiffer and Everett Falconer Harrison, eds., *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Old Testament)*, CD-ROM (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), bk. Je 13:18. “These two verses contain a message of warning to King Jehoiachin and his mother. GECL identifies the king by name in its section heading, while TOB provides a footnote that indicates both the name of the king and the function of the queen mother. Jehoiachin was the son and successor of Jehoiakim who died in 598 B.C. during the first siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army. Jehoiachin, who was only eighteen years old at the time, reigned only for three months before surrendering to the Babylonians. The queen mother may have exercised a great deal of influence over her son, but she also probably had an official position. For example, King Solomon’s mother sat on a throne to the right of the king (1 Kgs 2:19), which probably showed that she had official status.” Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 337.

“The queen mother’s importance is illustrated by the change in Bathsheba’s position after her son became king. When her husband David was king she did obeisance to him like any other subject (1 K. 1:16, 31); but after her son Solomon became king, he did obeisance to her and had her sit at his right hand (2:19). The queen mother apparently wore a crown (Jer. 13:18). Often she is mentioned with the king (e.g., 2 K. 24:12, 15; Jer. 13:18; 29:2); the books of Kings almost always mention her name along with that of each Judean king) e.g., 1 K. 14:21, 31; 15:2; 22:42; 2 K. 8:26),” N. J. Opperwall, “Queen Mother,” ed. Geoffrey
“Humble yourself!
Sit down!
For your headrests, crown, your fineries fell.
[19 The cities of the Negev\textsuperscript{10} were shut and were not opening;
Judah was exiled, all of her,
her being exiled was her complete peace.\textsuperscript{11}]
20 Lift up your eyes and see those who are coming from the North.
Where is the herd he gave to you, sheep, your fineries?
21 What will you say,
for he will visit upon you,
and you, you will learn them;\textsuperscript{12}
on account of you, your close friends will be at the head.\textsuperscript{13}
Are not the labor pains grasping you as those of the woman giving birth?
22 And because you said in your heart,
“Why did I call out to these?”
Because of the greatness of your sin you will be exiled;
your train will be violated by your heels.
23 Can\textsuperscript{14} the Cushite change his skin and the leopard his spots?
Then you would be able to do good,
disciples of evildoing.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{10} Or “south”

\textsuperscript{11} plural of majesty? Plural form of \textit{שלום} only occurs in Psa, 55:21, 69:23, Isa 34:8, Jer 13:19

\textsuperscript{12} the "visitation", or punishments.

\textsuperscript{13} i.e., not you.

\textsuperscript{14} Or “if”. "ן it is true that? in Jr 13.23 is practically equal to if: the conditional protasis is represented by a question…” Joüon and Muraoka, \textit{A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.)}, 594.

\textsuperscript{15} "… We seldom find theological reflection on 'sin' as a religious phenomenon of the utmost complexity [note: Genesis VI.5, VIII.21; Jeremiah XIII.23, XVII.9; Psalms XIV.2f., CXIV.11; Job XIV.4 are generally referred to in the older text-books.]” von Rad, \textit{Old Testament Theology I}, 1:154.

"… Prophets hardly say that the Commandments which Yahweh gave absolutely transcend Israel's capacity to fulfill them. Yet, what Jeremiah says about the Ethiopian who cannot change his spots and the Leopard which cannot change his skin does seem to point in this direction (Jeremiah XIII.23). Such a radical utterance as that of Joshua at the assembly at Shechem, that Israel cannot serve Yahweh (Joshua XXIV.19), is unparalleled in all the rest of the Old Testament.” von Rad, \textit{Old Testament Theology II}, 2:399. "No one in Israel had yet realized with such clarity as Ezekiel the incapacity of human beings to live with and belong to God. His representation of the saving history as a series of entirely fruitless attempts on God's part (Ezekiel XX) is almost blasphemous, and it too is connected with Joshua XXIV.19. It is clear, therefore, that a radically new factor had at this time entered into men's understanding of the will of
Yahweh, a factor which specially affected the prophets. The change in their outlook as compared with that of the earlier prophets is shown by the fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel made the concept of the will of God addressed Israel into something concrete by speaking summarily of Yahweh's Torah or of the statutes. [Note characteristic examples of these summary quotations of the Law are Jeremiah VI.19, VIII.8, IX.12 (13), XIV.11, XXXI.33, XXXII.23; Ezekiel V.6, XI.12, 20, XVIII. 5ff., XX.5ff., XXXVI.27. With some of these references, of course, account must be taken of the Deuteronomic stamp given to the prophet's words.]. They no longer judge single transgressions in the light of single Commandments, but measure Israel against the whole body of Yahweh's will, and to this degree they recognize Israel's complete incapacity to obey. For these prophets the hardest problem lies in the realm of anthropology – how can this 'rebellious house,' these men 'of a hard forehead and the stubborn heart' (Ezekiel II.3f.), Who are as little able to change themselves as an Ethiopian can change the color of his skin (Jeremiah XIII.23) – how can these be Yahweh's people? Here, then, Yahweh's commandments have turned into a law that judges and destroys. The change can be clearly seen in the prophetic utterance which may well come from this time. It is couched in the form of the liturgy of the gate, that is to say, the ritual of question and answer which took place on entering the precincts of the shrine. Now, however, the usual question runs in a completely different way – it has almost become a rhetorical question answered by 'the sinners' themselves: Who can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can dwell with the everlasting burning? (Isaiah XXXIII.14). What was once a ritual used in worship has become an insoluble problem." Ibid., 2:268–269. "It is only in the light of this devastatingly negative judgment on the possibility of Israel's setting her relationship to God to write again by her own efforts that one can understand not only what Jeremiah says about the new covenant, but also his imploring entreaty to return. Jeremiah gained ever-increasing insight into man's actual condition, and for this reason he did not unthinkingly demand that men should follow a rotor which he would inevitably come to grief. His appeals to return increasingly emanate 'from God's decision to say.' They urged the nation to settle for what God has promised to do for it. No matter how many reservations we mayhap about interpreting a prophet's message in terms of his own psychology, we may nevertheless assumed in the case of Jeremiah that he constantly reflected on the problem of man; that is to say, he reflected on the question of what must come about in man as man if God is to receive him into a new communion with himself. If God is again gracious to him, how can he in any way stand before him as man without once again coming to grief because of his heart's opposition to God? The answer which Jeremiah received to this question was the promise that God would himself change the human heart…” Ibid., 2:216–217.

16 a reference back to the loincloth illustration.

17 veil

18 “Baumann carefully examines Jeremiah 3 and 13, two notorious texts about divine marital violence, properly noting the disconnection of the imagery from the prophet’s life and thus the loss of any ability to excuse the imagery of charges of savagery. But one wonders whether the editors of Jeremiah were not themselves aware of the problem, at least to some degree. Chapter 13 leads immediately into two laments (14:1–10, 17–22) interrupted by a prose expansion in dialogue form critiquing the prophet’s lament and responding to it. Does the complex as a whole not offer some degree of qualification to the grotesque images of 13:15–27? The dialogue of Jer. 4:19–22 reflects a similar awareness of the problem. Or, in other
27 Your adultery and your neighing after wickedness,
your prostitution upon the hills, in the fields –
    I saw your vileness.
Woe to you Jerusalem!
    You did not clean up!
    For how much longer?

words, while the book of Jeremiah does not explicitly contradict the image of marital violence, the larger reality of war, attributed to YHWH’s actions, does elicit the prophet’s (or redactor’s) legitimate protest.”
Table 10: Jeremiah 14:1-15:9

| scribe | 14:1 That which came to pass, 
| | the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah,\(^1\) 
| | on account of the matters of the drought.\(^2\) 
| 2 | “Judah mourned 
| | and her gates were made to languish; 
| | they grew dark to the earth, 
| | and she wailed; 
| | Jerusalem went up. 
| 3 | And their larger ones sent their younger ones to the water; 
| | they came upon cisterns;\(^3\) 
| | they did not discover water; 
| | all of them returned empty-handed; 
| | they were ashamed and disgraced 
| | and they covered their heads. 
| 4 | Therefore the ground was dismayed 
| | for there was no rainwater in the land; 
| | farmers covered their heads. 
| 5 | For even does in the field gave birth and were abandoning, 
| | for there was no green growth. 
| 6 | And wild donkeys stood upon the barren heights; 
| | they pursued wind as the jackals; 
| | they filled their eyes, 
| | for there were no green plants. 
| People | 7 If [it was] our\(^4\) sins we sinned among us, Yahweh, |

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\(^2\) “Many commentators find two communal laments, one on the drought (vv. 1–16) and one on the wounds of war (vv. 17–22), with thematic and formal links between the two (vv. 9, 22; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard 1991: 200). Some see the drought and the war materials as referring to two separate historical catastrophes, but the two panels of poetry (vv. 1–10 and 17–22) interpret one another (Holladay 1986: 422) and speak of the same subject alternately imagined as meteorological and military events. Despite possible connections to an actual drought, the drought serves as a metaphor for the shattering of the nation in the cosmic battle and the uncreation of the world associated with it…more than the absence of rain threatens the community. Israel has forsaken the ‘fountain of living waters’ and dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water (2:13; 17:13).” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 14:1.

\(^3\) Cf. the Gospel of Thomas: “ (74) 46.9–11; He said, “O lord, there are many around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in | the cistern.” Craig A. Evans, Robert L. Webb, and Richard A. Wiebe, eds., Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index (Leiden; New York; Köln: E.J. Brill, 1993), 129.
do [something] for the sake of your name
for our backslidings increased;
against you we sinned.

8 Hope of Israel,
rescuer in the time of trouble,
why did you become as an alien in the land,
and as a traveler who spread out to spend the night?
9 Why did you become as a man bewildered,
as a warrior not able to rescue?
But you are in our inward parts, Yahweh,
and your name is called upon us.
Do not let us rest!

Scribe

10 Thus said Yahweh to this people,
"Thus their feet loved to wander;
they did not hold back,
and Yahweh did not favor them.
Now he will remember their sin
and he will visit their guilt."

Jeremiah

11 And Yahweh said to me,
"Do not pray on behalf of this people in regard to what is good.
12 Because they will fast –
I am not listening to their rejoicing,
and because they sacrificed burnt offerings and gifts
they are not favored,
for with the sword and with the famine and with disease,
I am finishing them off.”

13 And I said,
   “Ah, Lord Yahweh,
   the prophets are saying to them,
   ‘Do not fear;
   sword and famine will not be yours,
   for peace of truth7 I will give to you in this place.’”8

14 And Yahweh said to me,
   “The prophets are prophesying a lie in my name;
   I did not send them,
   and I did not command them,
   and I did not speak to them;
   a revelation of deception and divination and idolatries and
decitfulness of their hearts9
   they are prophesying to them.”

15 Therefore, thus said Yahweh,
   “On account of the prophets who are prophesying in my name
   and I did not send them,
   and they are saying,
   ‘Sword and famine will not come to pass in this land,’
   by sword and by famine those prophets will die.
16 And the people which they are prophesying to will be thrown
   outside Jerusalem
   before the famine and the sword
   and they will have no one burying them,
   they, their wives, nor their sons nor their daughters;
   and I will pour out their evil upon them.

17 And you will say to them this word,
   ‘Lower your eyes with weeping night and day,
   and do not cease,

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7 This is an unusual construction. Although the two terms appear together five times in this order in the Hebrew Bible (2Kin 21:1, Esth 10:1, Isa 42:9, Jere 17:17, Jere 36:7, generally translated 'peace and security'), this is the only time they appear together in the construct state. "Emet is often coupled with hesed ('covenant mercy'), which designates God loyalty in fulfilling his promises and his covenant." Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament, 301.

8 "The contradiction between prophets and prophet, each speaking in the name of Yahweh (ep. Jeremiah XXVII.4, XXVIII.2) must have been particularly confusing in the final. The Monarchy. As far as we can see from the relevant texts, their colleagues' proclamation of salvation was particularly suspect in the eyes of the 'true' prophets (1 Kings XXII.1ff.; Micah III.5ff.; Jeremiah VI.14, XIV.13, XXIII.9ff., XXVIII.5-9; Ezekiel XIII.16). It is probable that the false prophets and their predictions of salvation coincided with the interest of the national cult..." von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:210n.

9 "These prophets whom Jeremiah denounced look for the source of their message not to the Lord, but to their own deceitful heart." Young, My Servants, the Prophets, 125. This reality may also cast doubt on the people's confession above.
for a great breaking will break a virgin, daughter of my house — the wound exceedingly weakened [her].

| Jeremiah | 18 If I go out to the field, behold, those dead by the sword, and if I go to the city, then behold, diseases of the famine, for neither prophet nor priest are trading in [the] land, and they do not know. |
| People   | 19 Did you completely reject Judah? If in Zion our life was defiled, why were we struck by you and there was no healing for us, hoping for peace and there was nothing good and for a time of healing, and behold, terror! 20 We know, Yahweh, our wickedness, the sin of our fathers, for we sinned against you. 21 Do not despise, therefore, your name; do not dishonor the throne of your name. Remember, do not declare invalid, your covenant with us. |

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10 Or …the virgin daughter of my people…” Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.)*, 129r.


12 “Though Josiah’s reform had called the nation behind this dogma to a yet older theology, this had been, as we have seen, temporary and largely canceled by the disillusionment of Josiah’s tragic death and the unfortunate events that followed. The darker the hour, the more desperately the nation clung to the eternal promises to David, finding safety in the Temple where stood Yahweh’s throne (Jer. 7:4; 14:21), and in the cult through which his anger was appeased and his favor gained (chs. 6:14; 8:11; 14:7–9, 19–22). Elevated by theological optimism, the nation marched toward tragedy confident that the God who frustrated Sennacherib would frustrate Nebuchadnezzar also (chs. 5:12; 14:13). It is entirely likely that Jeremiah’s bitterest opponents (ch. 26:7–11) were small minded disciples of Isaiah not half up to their master’s stature! The disaster of 597 revived the problems raised by the Assyrian invasions, but with heightened intensity. Never before had Judah known such humiliation. Yahweh’s Temple looted of its treasures, and the legitimate Davidide ignominiously removed from his throne and taken captive to a far land! One may suppose that the impossibility of accepting this in the light of the dynastic promises fired wild hopes of Jehoiachin’s speedy restoration (ch. 27f.), caused substitute hopes to be attached to Zedekiah (ch. 23:5f.) — who was, after all, a Davidide — and finally drove the nation headlong into suicidal rebellion. The events of 597 seem to have been viewed as the great disciplinary purge spoken of by Isaiah, beyond which the promises would be made actual. The notion that the nation might fall was not entertained; down to the end, men awaited Yahweh’s intervention as in the days of Hezekiah (ch. 21:2). When the end did come, the official theology was helpless to explain it.” Bright, *A History of Israel*, chap. 8.C.1.a.

13 “The predominant usage of the term יפרבד in the hifil implies the concept of "making null and void." The term is used of a vow that is "made null and void" by subsequent action. A wife may commit herself by vow; but the husband may proceed to void the wife's vow (d. Num. 30:8 (9), 12 (13), 13 (14), 15 (16). The husband does not "break" the vow, since only the wife could perform that action. Instead, he
22 Can there exist among the idols of the nations the ability to bring rainwater?
And if the heavens give watering rain, is it not you who are he, Yahweh, our God?16

"nullifies" the oath his wife has made. In other passages, the verb is used in a context referring to counsel offered or to purposes determined. The point of these passages is not so much that the counsel offered is "broken," but that it is "frustrated" or "voided" because its promised success is not realized (II Sam. 17:14; Ezra 4:5; Provo 15:22; Neh. 4:15 (9); Job 40:8, Isa. 44:25). This idea of annulment is associated directly with the term "covenant" or in I Kings 15:19 (cf. 11 Chron. 16:3). In these verses Asa of Judah bribes Ben-Hadad of Syria to "nullify" his covenant with Israel. The context implies not so much that Ben-Hadad simply would violate the provisions of his treaty with Israel at a particular point. Instead, he is being encouraged to make null and void his treaty-relationship with Israel in favor of a different treaty relationship. The usage of the term in contexts relating to God's covenant with his people also suggests the idea of "nullification" rather than simply "violation." The uncircumcised male in Israel has "annulled" the covenant (Gen. 17:14). The person who sins defiantly has "nullified the covenant, and so shall be cut off from God's people (Num. 15:31). After Israel has entered the land of promise, they will forget the Lord and "annul" the covenant (Deut. 31:16,20). In each of these cases the idea seems to be one of "annulment" rather than simply of violation. Other passages in the Old Testament in which the term occurs in association with God's covenant with his people are: Ps. 119:126; Isa. 24:5; 33:8; Jer. 11:10; 31:32; Lev. 26:15; 26:44; Ezra 9:14; Ezek. 16:59; Zech. 11:10; Judg. 2:1; Jer. 14:21; Ezek. 44:7. In all of these places, it is quite likely that the concept "annulled" rather than "broke" is involved. O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants (Phillipsburg, N.J: P & R Pub, 1980), 284n.14

14 Some commentators believe that Israel's repentance is insincere: "There is a strange inconsistency in this plea, since it lay stress on Yahweh's obligations and overlooks the strong obligations of Israel to Yahweh." Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 386. But that doesn't quite seem to be the case. The specific reason why the prayer is not answered is because there intercessor, the prophet Jeremiah, has been taken away, in their figurative covenant head, Manasseh, has betrayed them.

15 i.e., who is doing it.

16 "In the prophets, the Noah covenant as the guarantee of creation appears again. For Deutero-Isaiah, it is that guarantee as well as being model and prototype for God's dealing with Israel after the catastrophe of the exile (Isa. 54:7–10). The Babylonian exile is comparable to the Flood, but as on that occasion, so now also a restoration happens through God's covenant, the 'covenant of peace' (berît šâlôm, v. 10).36 In Ezek. 34:25–31, we hear again of that covenant of peace after the exile, only here nature is drawn in also. The wild animals who have taken over the empty land will give it up again to its inhabitants. Rain will come at the right time and the earth will yield its increase. Seed time and harvest will again take place, as God had promised in the Noah covenant. [Note: Similar notes are sounded in Jeremiah where in 5:21–25 the astonishing assertion is made that Israel's sin disturbs the very order of creation, and in 14:19–22 the direct connection of remembering the covenant and reference to rain that only God can bring shows again how the Noah covenant is foundational for the relation between God and Israel. Rendtorff, 'Wo warst du …', pp. 110–11.] Creation and covenant, therefore, are inextricably bound together according to Rendtorff, and it is only through that binding that either human existence or Israel's existence can be maintained. One notes along the way of Rendtorff's argument how crucial is the methodological direction set by Childs. The Genesis and Exodus texts are interpreted as they present themselves without reference to prior stages or their literary complexity. Rendtorff acknowledges this diachronic disinterest in passing but clearly does not see it as a problem. The canonical/endform reading of the text that Childs has pressed so vigorously has opened up for Rendtorff a new way of thinking about creation and covenant." Patrick D. Miller, "Creation and Covenant," in Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement (JSOTS) 267 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 481–482.
and we are hoping in you, for you, you are doing all these things.’”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeremiah 15:1 And Yahweh said to me, “If Moses and Samuel were standing before me,”</th>
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17 "There is another important function of the Old Testament prophet which the canon has clearly recognized, and which has been seriously addressed by critical scholarship only rather recently. This has to do with the prophet's role as intercessor. Amos is pictured in chapter 7 attempting to intercede for Israel's sake before each divine decision of judgment (vv. 2ff.). Again, Jeremiah is described as defending the people until he is commanded by God not to pray for its welfare (15.1ff.). Similarly, Ezekiel was made dumb in order to bring to a halt any intercession on his part for the rejected people (3.25ff.). To a great extent the enormous passion of Jeremiah's ministry arose from his deep involvement with the very people he was commissioned to judge." Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 127. "What sacrifice was for a priest, prayer was for a prophet." Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 322. "Nowhere in the book of Jeremiah is the intercessory function of the prophet’s office better attested than here. The concept ‘intercession’ was an implicit, albeit crucial, factor in the passages previously investigated. Here it rises to the surface of the text to become an explicit theme. On this point contemporary scholarship is virtually unanimous… The significant fact is that both responses to the people’s prayers are negative. Instead of receiving the expected assurance of pardon and deliverance, the people are given a judgment oracle and the prophet is prohibited from interceding on their behalf, the prohibitions connecting our passage with 7:16–17 and 11:14–17. The juxtaposition of the prayers with the prohibitions leads Wilson to conclude, rightly, that the people did not address God directly but ‘channeled their requests through Jeremiah, the Mosaic prophet’. In other words, the first-person plural complaints of vv. 7–9 and 19–22 are to be read as intercessory prayer offered by Jeremiah standing in the people’s place before God… the prohibitions [against intercession] serve to underscore the people’s incorrigibility. But much more broadly, they belong to a comprehensive effort at illuminating God’s purposes with Israel at a critical moment in her history, a moment which, in keeping with the logic of scripture, was seen and rendered as somehow epitomizing life under the divine economy of judgment and salvation. This illumination was to be achieved through the depiction of the complex inter-relationships among people, prophet, and God. In this depiction the prophet occupies the pivotal position. From the theological perspective, the point of the passage is less a parochial defense of Jeremiah than his representation as a paradigm, both in his frailty as a member of an apostate people and in the peculiar strength granted him to speak God’s word and share his pathos. As a paradigm, Jeremiah’s life, what he says and does and what is said and done to him, is used to reflect and interpret the experience of Israel as a whole.” Polk, *The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self*, 75, 76, 77. “Where does this oracle then leave Jeremiah? In banning intercession and thus preventing the prophet from performing an activity felt to be constitutive of his identity, Yhwh has changed the rules of the prophetic game midstream and subverted Jeremiah’s very self-understanding. Jeremiah’s differentiation from the people seems therefore to work only negatively, i.e. only to permit the confirmation of the judgment which the people richly deserve but which they thought conveniently to avoid through the mechanism of intercession. Jeremiah appears to be left alone, no doubt confused and clearly unvindicated. Of course, this is to ignore what Gerstenberger has already shown, namely that the passage ends not in 15:4 but 15:21 and that in the second act of the drama Jeremiah’s differentiation from the people works positively, resulting not in the unconditional rejection which the people receive but in a promise of salvation. And the promise proves that Jeremiah’s representative status does not terminate with his intercession. Rather, he remains Yhwh’s representative such that all that we said of him in relation to 14:17–18 continues to apply. As in his grieving with Yhwh and at Yhwh’s command for his people, Jeremiah’s life illustrates the divine pathos and interprets the divine word/action. The prophetic life becomes a medium for the message. But even with regard to the people, Jeremiah’s representative status does not come to an end. Rather, it shifts in character, in fact gets expanded. To be sure, he can no longer represent the people as their intercessor, i.e. with just words, even words he truly means. Now he represents them, again, with his life—both in what he suffers and in what he is promised. For just as his identification with the people is not total, neither is his differentiation from them total. Being mortal, having to confess sins, he remains subject to judgment, is in fact rebuked, and
my life is not toward this people.
    Send [them] from before my presence
    and let them leave!

2 And it will come to pass that they will say to you,
   ‘For where will we leave?’
   And you will say to them, ‘Thus said Yahweh,
   “The one for death to death,
   and the one for the sword to the sword,
   and the one for the famine to the famine,
   and the one for the captivity to the captivity.”

3 And I will visit upon them four judgments.
   Utterance of Yahweh!
   The sword to kill
   and the dogs to drag away
   and the birds of the heavens
   and the beast of the earth to eat and to destroy,

must suffer with the people in the hard realities of the national disaster. However, the fact is that he also has
reconfirmed to him the original promise of God’s presence and deliverance (cf. ch. 1). This same promise
is in turn extended to the exiles in Babylon (24:4–7), to the disciple Baruch (ch. 45), and ultimately to the
people as a whole (chs. 30–33). Gerstenberger was right: Jeremiah’s life becomes a paradigm in the divine
economy of judgment and salvation. The medium is the message.” Ibid., 101–102. “Standing before” (ְֻֽלְבּ֑ד) is a common term used in some biblical texts to describe the juridical position of those in the trial.
During arraignments, the one pleading stands and the judge is seated.” James K. Bruckner, *Implied Law in
the Abraham Narrative: A Literary and Theological Analysis*, vol. 335, Journal for the Study of the Old
between God and Israel. Abraham sacrificed and prayed to God in the name of his clan (Gen. 12:7-8) and
he also interceded on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:22-33). Jacob sacrificed to God and
received God’s blessing on all his descendants in Israel (Gen. 35:1-15). Moses mediated between God and
the Hebrews in Egypt, during the wandering in the desert, at Sinai, and when Israel sinned by worshiping
the golden calf (Exod. 32:30-34). Joshua mediated between God and the people in the making of the
covenant in Israel (Josh. 24:14-28), Samuel mediated the appointment of the first king (1 Sam. 8-12), and
Solomon prayed in the people’s name at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:22-53). The prophets who
acted as God’s messengers in bringing his word to the people also acted as mediators in effecting
reconciliation between the people and God (Jer. 14:1-9). Finally, the Suffering Servant found in Second
Isaiah 53, whatever his identity, atones for the sins of Israel and effects a reconciliation between God and
Israel. In the NT Jesus is explicitly called a mediator in only four passages, one from the Pauline literature
and three from Hebrews. ‘For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man
Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all’ (1 Tim. 2:5-6). In Hebrews Christ is three times said to
mediate the new covenant between God and humans (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Hebrews also develops a
notion that is found in the passage from 1 Timothy, namely, that Jesus redeems humans. All these
statements in Hebrews are set in the context of the new temple in heaven where Christ is the high priest and
the one perfect sacrifice. Jesus also mediates by praying for his disciples (John 17; Matt. 11:25-27), by
healing, by teaching God’s word, and by forgiving people their sins. All of Jesus’ activities to save humans
can be looked on as mediation between God and humanity (though the NT does not use that category to
characterize Jesus’ work and words). Consequently, believers are instructed to pray in Jesus’ name to God
(John 14:13). Many Pauline and Gospel passages say or imply that contact with God is through Jesus Christ
and this implies mediation by Jesus.” Anthony J. Saldarini, “Mediation, Mediator,” ed. Paul J Achtemeier,
4 to become a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth,
on account of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, king of Judah\(^{18}\)
on account of what he did in Jerusalem.

5 For who will have mercy upon you Jerusalem,
and who will wander to you,
and who will turn aside to ask in regard to your peace?
6 You, you forsook me!
Utterance of Yahweh!

Backsliding you went
and my hand was spread out upon you
and I destroyed you;
I belabored comfortings.
7 And I scattered them with a pitchfork in the gates of the land;
I bereaved,
I destroyed my people;
from their ways they did not return.
8 Their widows became more numerous than the sand of the sea;
I brought [it] to them,
upon mother, young man,
devastation;
in the noon times I brought down upon her suddenly anguish and terror.
9 I made the one who bore seven\(^{19}\) languish;
I blew upon her life,
her sun while it was still daytime;
she was ashamed
and she had dismay
and their descendants I gave to the sword
in the presence of their enemies.
Utterance of Yahweh!

\(^{18}\) note that these first four verses highlight the intercessory role of Jeremiah as prophet (also Moses and Samuel), and the federal headship of the King in relationship to Israel. “Clements (1988: 94–6) discusses the dislike of Manasseh shared by the book of Jeremiah and the Deuteronomistic history.” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer 15:1.

“Second Kings 21:3–7 and 2 Chronicles 33:3–7 describe Manasseh’s wicked acts, which included astral worship and Baal altars even within the temple itself. He was considered to have done the most to combine the worship of Yahweh with Canaanite cultic ritual. Though he later repented (2 Chron 33:12), his sins were so great that their consequences were not to be overturned by God.” Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, bk. Je 15:4.

\(^{19}\) "... Proverbially describes the fulfilled or complete mother; compare 1 Samuel 2:5 and Route 4:15. The shame of the woman is comparable to the shame of the nobles and farmhands in 14:3-4.” Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., *WBC 26*, 26:204.
Table 11: Jeremiah 15:10-16:21

| Jeremiah to Yahweh | 15:10 Woe to me,¹ my mother, that you bore me,  
a man of contention²  
and a man of strife  
against all the land;  
I did not forget  
and they did not forget about me;  
he completely is cursing me |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Yahweh to Jeremiah | 11 Yahweh said,  
“If I did not deliver you unto good;  
if I let you be struck in the time of evil,  
and in a time of trouble of the enemy,  
12 How can iron come to ruin,  
iron from the north,  
and copper?³  
13 Your strength and your treasury rooms I gave to be plunder,  
not for a price,  
both in all your sins  
and in all your borders.  
14 And I will make you serve your enemies in a land you did not know;  
for a fire kindled in my anger;  
upon you it was burning. |
| Yahweh to people   | 15 You, you know, Yahweh.  
Remember me  
and visit me |

¹ “The climax of the Old Testament's witness regarding the inner struggle of the prophet appears in the so-called 'confessions of Jeremiah', which are found in chapters 11, 12, 15, 17 and 20. The prophet is aghast to learn that there is a plot on his life and in his dialogue with God he raises an intense complaint regarding his ministry (11.18ff.). He pictures the desolation and misery of his life and accuses God of having seduced him (15.15ff.; 20.7ff.). The nadir is reached in chapter 20 in which he erupts in a bitter self-implication (14ff.). Scholars have long debated on how to interpret these confessions. Some have thought that they represented momentary periods of depression. Others saw them as the private side of a life which was generally hidden from public view. All seemed agreed that the confessions had little to do with Jeremiah's function as a prophet. Once again, the major credit goes to von Rad for pointing in a new theological direction. In a brilliant article in 1936 he argued – in my judgment, canonically – that the inclusion of the confessions was not a distraction from Jeremiah's public ministry, but represented an important witness precisely regard to his office as prophet. The struggles of Jeremiah are not to be dismissed as an internal, psychological weakness, but testify to the fundamental theological tension of being a human being called as a vehicle of destruction to one's own people.” Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, 128.

² “He is like one constantly in a lawsuit with his people,” Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 475.

³ Iron and copper is probably a reference to Jeremiah, given Yahweh’s statements about him later in v. 20. Cf. also 1:18.
and bring vengeance to me
don't let your anger grasp me long;
know that lifting me upon you is disgrace.
16 Your words were discovered and I ate them
and your words to me became [the] joy and pleasure of my heart,
for your name was called upon me,
Yahweh, God of armies.
17 I do not sit in the council of those laughing,
and I rejoiced in the presence of your hand;
alone I sat,4

4 There was a long-standing tradition of alienation among the prophets of ancient Israel. Jeremiah has already come to mind: “I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone” (Jer 15:17). Then, in exilic and postexilic Judaism various groups of alienated priests appear on the scene. P. D. Hanson sees the “dawn of apocalyptic” taking place among groups of alienated visionary priests as early as the 6th–5th centuries B.C.E. (1975: 209–28, 280–86, 389–401). Moreover, in the middle of the 2d century B.C.E. there was a sharp revulsion against the Maccabees which nourished, among others, the Qumran community, a group that consisted largely of lower rural priests alienated from the aristocratic urban priests of Jerusalem (Cross 1958: 95–119; 1973: 332–42). Among the important statements from the Dead Sea Scrolls which express this rift is the following interpretation of Hab 2:8a (“Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you.”): “This refers to the final priests of Jerusalem who will amass for themselves wealth and gain by plundering the people” (1QpHab 2:8; Gaster 1964: 249). The case of Qumran is especially significant because John was like the people of Qumran in many respects; he may even have been a member of that group or a similar group (Davies 1983; Betz 1985). Josephus supports this statement by his references to the great social and economic gulf that existed between the aristocratic priests and the large mass of lower clergy that developed just before the great revolt in the 60s C.E. There now was enkindled mutual enmity and class warfare between the high priests, on the one hand, and the priests and leaders of the populace of Jerusalem, on the other. Each of the factions formed and collected for itself a band of the most reckless revolutionaries and acted as their leader. And when they clashed, they used abusive language and pelted each other with stones ... Such was the shamelessness and effrontery which possessed the high priests that they actually were so brazen as to send slaves to thethreshing floors to receive the tithes that were due to the priests, with the result that the poorer priests starved to death (Ant 20.8.8 §180–81; also 29.9.2 §205–7; further details in Stern 1976: 561–700). More broadly-based alienation is indicated by the first revolt of the Jews against the Romans upon the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.E. (JW 2.1.1–6.2 §1–92; Ant 17.9.1–11.3 §206–314; Farmer 1958; Horsley and Hanson 1985: 111–17). A striking confirmation of the luxury of the Jerusalem (probably priestly) aristocracy has come to light in the recent excavations in the “Jewish Quarter of the Old City” of Jerusalem (Avigad 1976: 1.23–35). In this “fashionable and wealthy residential section overlooking the Holy Temple” a Herodian house of 2,000 square feet was unearthed, as well as a larger one the archaeologists dubbed “The Mansion.” On a stone weight found in “The Mansion” was inscribed “Bar Kathros,” the name of one of four priestly families mentioned in the Talmud (Pesaḥ 57a) as exploiting the people and beating them with rods. “Our Bar Kathros was probably of this family,” conjectures Avigad (1976: 29; see also Mazar 1980). These houses with their varied contents demonstrate the luxury of the aristocracy in Jerusalem just before the time of John the Baptist. Thus John was surrounded by a pervasive climate of alienation; one scholar (Ford 1976) argues that this probably reached into his own family. It was from this urban setting that John retreated to the wilderness, a location of profound symbolic significance as the place of death, purification and rebirth (Hollenbach 1974; W. D. Davies 1974: 75–104). These meanings are reflected at Qumran, where those who joined the community separated themselves from the wicked “to the end that they may indeed ‘go into the wilderness to prepare the way,’i.e., do what Scripture enjoins when it says, ‘Prepare in the wilderness the way ... make straight in the desert a highway for our God’ [Isa. 40:3]” (1QS 8:12–16; Gaster 1964: 64). That going into the wilderness sometimes had even
for anger filled me.
18 Why did my anguish become eternal
   and my wound incurable,
   that refused to be healed.
Surely, you will be to me as intermittent waters;
   they were not true.\(^5\)

Yahweh to
Jeremiah

| 19 Therefore, thus said Yahweh,           |
| "If you return, then I will return you;  |
|   before my face you will stand;         |
|   and if you bring out a precious thing,  |
|   more than despising,                   |
|   you will be as my mouth.\(^6\)         |
| They will return to you,                 |
|   and you will not return to them.       |
| 20 And I gave you to this people to be a |
|   wall of fortified bronze,\(^7\)         |
|   and they will fight against you        |
|   and they will not overcome you         |
|   for I am with you to deliver you and   |
|   rescue you.\(^8\)                      |
| Utterance of Yahweh!                     |
| 21 And I will deliver you from the hand  |
|   of the wicked                          |
|   and I will redeem you from the palm of |
|   the ruthless.\(^9\)                     |

messianic significance is indicated by Matt 24:26a: “So, if they say to you, ‘Lo, he [the Messiah] is in the wilderness, ‘do not go out.’” Paul W. Hollenbach, “John the Baptist,” Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 892.

\(^5\) “The ‘deceptive brook’ was a familiar figure to all his readers (cf. Job 6:15-20). In Palestine many brooks of water only after a downpour. At other times a traveler may be disappointed if he looks for water in them (contrast 2:13). In his distraught state, Jeremiah charge the Lord with failure to fulfill his promises to strengthen him in his resistance against his enemies (1:18-19).” Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 477.

\(^6\) “In this call the Lord says: ‘And thou, thou shalt gird thy loins, and thou shalt arise and thou shalt speak unto them all that which I shall command the’ (Jeremiah 1:17a). The similarity of this language with that of Deuteronomy 18:18 is striking. The function which Jeremiah is to discharge is that of speaking the words which God gives them. It is thus also that the prophet himself understood the call. In verse five, God had declared that even before his birth, Jeremiah had been sanctified and been set apart to be a \textit{nabhi}. Immediately upon hearing this announcement, Jeremiah cries that he does not know how to speak… Jeremiah was to be a \textit{nabhi}, therefore he would have to engage in speaking, and it was the thought that he would be required to speak that caused him to complain.” Young, \textit{My Servants, the Prophets}, 59.

\(^7\) “Bronze gates built by the Assyrians have been found at Balawat. They were decorative features on strong walls. Thutmose III of Egypt described himself as a wall of iron and bronze for Egypt, meaning that he was like an impregnable fortress city.” Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, The IVP Bible Background Commentary, bk. Jer 15:20.

\(^8\) forms an \textit{inclusio} with 1:18-19.
And the word of Yahweh came to pass to me, saying,
2 ‘‘Do not take a wife for yourself, and there will be no sons and daughters for you in this place.’’
3 For thus said Yahweh

16:1 And the word of Yahweh came to pass to me, saying,
2 “Do not take a wife for yourself, and there will be no sons and daughters for you in this place.”
3 For thus said Yahweh

on account of the sons and upon the daughters who are born in this place,
and on account of their mothers who bore them,
and on account of their fathers who caused them to be born in this land:
4 a diseased death they will die;
them will not be mourned
and they will not be buried;
they will become as refuse upon the face of the ground,
and by the sword
and by the famine
they will come to an end,
and she will become dead bodies

9 “This many-leveled poem depicts Jeremiah as a person who suffers because of his undesired prophetic vocation. It shows him to be a true prophet of YHWH, rejected by his own people. His persecution and sense of divine abandonment, however, resemble the suffering of the exiles, and the invitation for him to repent repeats the book’s frequent invitation and expression of repentance voiced by the implied audience. YHWH’s promise to deliver Jeremiah from the ‘ruthless’ (v. 21), therefore, implies hope for the audience.” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer 15:10.

10 “Since the restrictions involved his total and continuous lifestyle, they comprised a greater depth of personal cost-involvement than did those sign-acts which were only solitary and momentary presentations. For Jeremiah, his behaviors resulted in a lack of offspring, social exclusion with its accompanying loneliness, and probably even caused scorn and ridicule to be directed at him. Such a depth of personal involvement must have been noticed by the audience. This should have helped to confirm in their minds the depth of conviction Jeremiah had concerning the issue, as well as to verify that what was being done was not by personal preference but through divine imposition. Recognition of the latter should have lent a greater sense of authority, and therefore suasive credibility, to the message Jeremiah proclaimed.” Friebel, *Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts*, 98.

“… Jeremiah not as a prophet but as the subject of prophecy, a figure of the end-time. He appears in this guise in the little-noticed reference in MT. 16:14, where people speculate that Jesus may be John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. And he is also mentioned, just as briefly, in 4 Ezra: Do not fear, mother of the sons, for I have chosen you, says the Lord. I will send you help, my servants Isaiah and Jeremiah. According to their counsel I have consecrated and prepared for you twelve trees loaded with various fruits, and the same number of springs flowing with milk and honey, and seven mighty mountains on which roses and lilies grow; by these I will fill your children with joy (4 Ezra 2:17–19). We might suspect from these allusions that there was a body of tradition in which Jeremiah, like Elijah, was expected to return to usher in the end. But it seems not to have survived, or at least not in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha that I have been able to consult.” John Barton, “Jeremiah in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha,” in *Troubling Jeremiah*, ed. A. R Diamond, Kathleen M O’Connor, and Louis Stulman, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 260 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 316.

11 Israel?
to be food to the birds of the heavens
and to the beasts of the earth.”

5 Thus said Yahweh,
“Do not enter the funeral house,
and do not go to mourn,
and do not wander to them,
for I gathered [up] my peace from [being] with his people –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
the lovingkindness and compassions.

6 And the great and the small will die in this land;
they will not be buried
and they will not mourn for them,
and they will not cut themselves
and they will not be shaved.13

7 And they will not offer food to them
on account of mourning,
to comfort him on account of dying
and no water will be given to them, a cup of consolation14
on account of his father

---

12 “… the LORD instructs Jeremiah to conduct his life (or, maintain a lifestyle) in such a manner
as to support his message. It was normally expected of a Jewish man that he marry and have children, but
Jeremiah is told to abstain from marriage and family life as a means of revealing the harshness of the
judgment that God would bring upon the people (16:1–4). He must not even attend a funeral (16:5–7) or a
wedding (16:8–9), thereby giving further indication of the destruction of society that would take place
when God allowed Israel’s enemies to destroy their nation and city.” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on
Jeremiah, 382.

13 Probably a reference to Canaanite funeral ritual associated with Baal-worship. “Thereupon the
Gracious One, the kindly god, descends from the throne, sits on the footstool, (descends) from the
footstool, sits on the earth.mmm He pours dirt of mourning on his head, dust of humiliation on his
cranium,nnn for clothing, he is covered with a girded garment. With a stone he scratches incisions on (his)
skin, with a razor he cuts cheeks and chin. He harrows his upper arms, plows (his) chest like a garden
harrows (his) back like a (garden in a) valley.” Dennis Pardee, “The Ba’lu Myth,” in Canonical
Compositions from the Biblical World, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., Writings from
the Ancient World 1 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 267–268. “Leviticus specifically
prohibits shaving, cutting the hair, tattooing, or the making of gashes in the skin on account of the dead

14 “In objective chains (also called “adverbial”) the action implicit in, or suggested by, the head
brings about or causes the condition named…the cup that brings consolation…” Frederic Clarke Putnam,
Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student’s Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew (Quakertown, PA: Stylus

“A repeated series of actions or a habitual behavior can be designated by a plural, and that term
can have an abstract sense: the כוס תנחומים (Jer 16:7) is ‘a cup’ not of repeated acts of comfort, but ‘a cup of
consolation,’ a cup that itself gives ‘consolation’ by the drinking of it.” Waltke and O’Connor, An
Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, 121.
and on account of his mother.

8 And you shall not go to the house of feasting

15 “A Nabataean Commemorative Inscription From Avdat (2.43) This is a rare example of a non-funerary Nabataean building inscription. Found ca. 2 km south of Avdat on what was probably a libation altar, it mentions a religious celebration (mrzḥ) connected with Dushara and is dated, though the reading of the date is uncertain. Event being recorded (lines 1–2a): This is the dam (which was built) by ... and ... sons of ... (and his associates) the sons of Saruta. Dedication and date (lines 2b–4): This was at the marzea-festival [note: The marzea (Heb. Form, Jer. 16:5, Amos 6:7) is a widespread phenomenon stretching from Ebla in the third millennium BCE to Marseilles in the first millennium CE and also alluded to in later Jewish sources. It refers to a communal celebration by members of a fraternity involving eating and drinking under the supervision of a symposiarch. Strabo refers to such celebrations by the Nabataeans. See COS 2.36, note 18.] of Dushara, the god of Gaia,3 in the year 7 (?) ... of King Rabbel, King of the Nabataeans, who brings life and deliverance to his people. [note: The date is far from certain, but the 7th year of Rabbel II (70–106 CE) was 76/77 CE. (This follows Meshorer 1975; Negev 1963 has the 18th year). The titulature “he who has brought life and deliverance to his people” is an Aramaic version of the Greek title σωτήρ.] J. F. Healey, “Nabatean Inscriptions,” in Context of Scripture, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 2 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 164–165.

“Discovered in 1902 by Sayce, published by him in 1909 (RES 1295), deposited in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 35468A), and recopied by Lidzbarski in 1915, though without plate (ESE III 119–121), this ostracon is the only Elephantine document to mention this institution, so widely known in the world of West-Semitic inscriptions for over a millennium. It was a funerary association that held periodic banquets. Asked by the anonymous writer about the money for the marzēḥ, the Aramean Ashian replied that the till was empty but that he would forward funds to Haggai or Igdal, persons bearing Jewish names. The writer herein instructs Haggai to get the money from Ashian. It is not apparent what role each of the four parties played in the association, and different combinations are possible.” Bezalel Porten, “Instructions Regarding Silver For Marzea (3.87d) (Tad D7.29),” in Context of Scripture, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 3 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 211.

“Amos and Jeremiah reprove certain forms of behavior associated with the marzēḥ, rather than condemning it as a place of false worship.” Dennis Pardee, Ritual and Cult at Ugarit, ed. Theodore J. Lewis, Writings from the Ancient World 10 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 234.

“El’s Divine Feast: This text is typical of many Ugaritic tales which tantalize the imagination with the fascinating escapades of the deities, yet bristle with so many problems of interpretation that readers are left uncertain about many crucial turns. Perhaps the Ugaritic bards knew that the best story should leave an audience thirsting for more. Banquet scenes occur often in the Ugaritic myths. This text describes the god El, the head of the pantheon, arranging a banquet for the gods in which he himself participates to excess. The fare consists of choice pieces of game and enough drink to rival any Greek bacchanal. The beginning of the text finds El preparing the cuts of meat for the mess which is to take place at his residence. At his invitation, the gods feast and drink to the point of inebriation. We then meet up with the moon god Yarikh, although scholars debate his role in the tale (a few would remove the deity completely, preferring to see reference to a monthly [yrḥ] feast instead). He seems to be skilled in the culinary art of meat preparation, as he cooks and carves portions for deities he favors. Other interpretations (based in part on reconstructing the word “dog” in line 5) see Yarikh in a far more debased role crawling around under the tables like a dog and receiving either scraps of food or beatings. The goddesses Anat and Athtartu prepare the choicest of cuts for Yarikh and are then rebuked by El’s gatekeeper (identity not disclosed). He thinks such fare should not be wasted on an inferior deity who is no better than a dog. The best should be reserved for El, the chief god of the pantheon, who is, after all, the host of the party. He also rebukes the god El perhaps for a party that is getting out of control. The tale then focuses on El’s behavior at the banquet, which is called a marzēḥ, an institution known for its drinking throughout much of the ancient Near East (cf. Amos 6:7; Jeremiah 16:5). El drinks to inebriation and staggers home with the help of two little-known deities (Thukamuna and
No single English term renders perfectly Northwest Semitic marz, but “drinking club” is chosen because it expresses the common denominator of the textual sources, viz., the consumption of wine, as well as the social but non–cultic form and function of the institution. The written sources span at least two millennia, from Ugarit to early Rabbinic texts, and nearly always refer to wine, its production, its provision by one party for others, or its effects. In spite of the widely held view that the marz was a theater for the cult of the dead, not a single text known to date explicitly links the two phenomena and I doubt, therefore, that such a connection was ever more than incidental (see Pardee 1996 for a more detailed argument along these lines, with some recent bibliography). Though each marz seems to have had a deity as patron, there is no evidence that sacrifice, the sine qua non of old Northwest Semitic cultic activity, took place in the marz.” Dennis Pardee, “Ilu On A Toot (1.97) (Rs 24.258),” in Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., Writings from the Ancient World 1 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 303. “The point at which one may speak in some sense of ‘divine’ kingship is in the growing evidence for a cult of the dead at Ugarit. The key text is RS 34.126, which appears to be a funeral liturgy for a recently deceased king. The ritual serves to provide the dead king with essential services and secure the blessings for his successor. In this context the rpum, apparently the long-dead ancestors, and the mlkm, the recently dead rulers, are invoked to take part in the ritual. In the Ugaritic king list (KTU 1.113) a deceased ancestor is referred to as an il, ‘god’. This does not necessarily mean a high god of the pantheon, but rather a divinized ancestor who has become a part of the rpum and through the funerary cult has some relation to those living.36 It is not clear what is the relationship of the cult of the dead to the marziu/marzēaḥ, a social and religious association of persons who engaged in apparently regular festive celebration and banqueting that was sometimes associated with funerals and, at Ugarit, seems to have involved the rpum, the departed ancestors.37 In part, at least, the association seems to have engaged in mourning rites and memorials for the dead through their activities of eating and drinking. In any event, the marzēaḥ is a further example of religious or cultic continuity between second-millennium religious practices in Syria and the practices of Arameans, Phoenicians, and Israelites (see Jer. 16:5) in the first millennium.” Patrick D. Miller, “Aspects of the Religion of Ugarit,” in Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement (JSOTS) 267 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 83. “…any drinking club (devoted to) a god [note: On the marzh institution in general, see introduction to RS 24.258 (text 1.97). As regards the expression marzh ‘lm here, it is a commonplace of the marz to have a patron deity (note that ‘lm functions in Phoenician–Punic as a singular, not a plural). The marz of Šatranu is known from Ugarit (and there is indirect evidence for others devoted to ‘Attartu Hurri and ‘Anatu), Šamaḥ is attested as patron of a marz in a Phoenician inscription, and Obodat and Dušara are known as patrons from Nabataean sources. When the meeting place of the marz was located next to the sanctuary of a deity (as in the case of the sanctuary of Baalshamin at Palmyra), or when the priests of a given deity formed a marz (as in the case of the priests of Bol at Palmyra), it appears likely that in these cases also the marz in question was devoted to the deity mentioned, even if the relationship is not stated explicitly. And when there is a myth regarding a deity who has “his” marz (as in the case of ‘Ilu in RS 24.258), it is not illegitimate to posit the existence of a marz devoted to that deity in the real world, in this case twelfth-century Ugarit. One may find documentation on and discussion of these data in Pardee 1988a:55–56].…” Dennis Pardee, “Punic Sacrificial Tariff (1.98),” in Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., Writings from the Ancient World 1 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 309.

Shunama), who have to carry him. A mysterious (at least to us) figure, Habayu, known as “he of two horns and tail,” berates El for his behavior. El collapses dead drunk, falling in his own waste. The chided goddesses Anat and Athtartu set off to hunt. The text breaks off without stating the object of their quest. Scholars suggest that they are in search of either more game to replenish El’s table or a cure for El’s condition. The back of the tablet describes the return of the goddesses, who bring back ingredients for some type of healing procedure. Many have reasoned that the recipe must be a cure for patients suffering from hangovers and thus the intimate connection with a tale of El’s overindulgence. Once again, readers are teased. All of the ingredients of this wonder potion are clear, except one. What is a tqq-plant and where does one find it?” Simon B. Parker, ed., Ugaritic Narrative Poetry: English Translations and Introductory Material, Writings from the Ancient World 9 (Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 193–194.
9 For thus said Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, 
   "I am causing to cease from this place,
   to your eyes and in your days,
   the sound of joy and the sound of rejoicing,
   the sound of bridegroom and the sound of the bride."

10 And it will come to pass that you will report to this people all these words,

   and they will say to you,
   "For what reason does Yahweh speak upon us these great evils,
   and what is our guilt and what is our sin that we sinned against
   Yahweh our God?"

11 And you will say to them,
   "On account of whom their fathers abandoned – me!"
   Utterance of Yahweh!

   And they went after other gods
   and they served them
   and they worshipped them,
   but me they abandoned,
   and my law they did not keep.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh to</th>
<th>12 But you, you inflicted evil,</th>
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17 Further evidence that the previous prayers of confession were never used by Israel.

18 "... A radically new factor had at this time entered into men's understanding of the will of Yahweh, a factor which specially affected the prophets. The change in their outlook as compared with that of the earlier prophets is shown by the fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel made the concept of the will of God addressed to Israel into something concrete by speaking summarily of Yahweh's Torah or of the statutes. [Note: Characteristic examples of these summary quotations of the Law are Jeremiah VI.19, VIII.8, IX.12 (13), XVI.11, XXXI.33, XXXII.23; Ezekiel V.6, XI.12, 20, XVIII.5ff., XX.5ff, XXXVI.27. With some of these references, of course, the account has to be taken of the Deuteronomic stamp given to the prophet's words.]. They no longer judge single transgressions in the light of single commandments, but measure Israel against the whole body of Yahweh's will, and to this degree they recognize Israel's complete incapacity to obey. For these prophets the hardest problem lies in the realm of anthropology – how can this 'rebellious house,' these men 'of a hard forehead and a stubborn heart' (Ezekiel II.3f.), who are as little able to change themselves as an Ethiopian can change the color of his skin (Jeremiah XIII.23) – how can these be Yahweh's people? Here, then, Yahweh's commandments have turned into a law that judges and destroys." von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:268–269.

19 Note the switch to the plural.
| people | doing more than your fathers,  
and behold, you were walking, each one,  
after the stubbornness of his evil heart,  
instead of listening to me. |
| --- | --- |
| Yahweh to Jeremiah (scribe?) | 13 And I threw them far away from this land  
upon a land which they did not know,  
they, nor their fathers,  
and they will serve there other gods day and night,  
Yahweh to people | where I will not give kindness to you. |
| Yahweh to people | 14 Therefore, behold, days are coming  |

20 According to von Rad, 16:1-13 “… is dependent on the Deuteronomistic terminology and is in prose. For prophetic diction, the latter suggests in principle a secondary redaction.” von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:193n. While the section is marked off by a separate messenger formula at its beginning, it does not appear to me to be pure prose. There are a few instances of Deuteronomistic terminology, but continuing research into Jeremiah has shown that this influence pervades throughout the entire book and is not necessarily the sign of a redactor.

21 “Deutero-Isaiah also draws biographical correlations into his vast typological net. In one instance he refers to Noah in a most striking way. After referring to the desolations of the exile caused by divine wrath (Isa. 54: 7-8), the prophet adds: כְּזֶה־יָמִים ְּנָכָה־לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי גְדוֹלָתָו, כְּזֶה־יָמִים ְּנָכָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי גְדוֹלָתָו: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again inundate the earth, p So do I forswear future anger and wrath against you. For though the mountains may move and the hills be displaced, my graciousness will not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be disrupted—says YHWH, your consoler’ (vv. 9-10). What is expressed here is a typological association between the primordial flood and the late Judaean exile. Just as the former was an expression of wrath, but ended with a divine promise of permanence in the natural order (Gen. 8: 21-2,9: 15-17), so now the wrath of exile will give way to an era of eternal divine grace. In this way the ancient covenant with Noah and his descendants will be recapitulated in the post-exilic period. For just as the post-diluvian world involved a divine renewal of the primordial creation, and a divine promise that such destruction would ‘never again’ be repeated (cf. הָרַקְתָּן, ְנָכָה, Gen. 8: 21), so now Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah repeatedly emphasize the theme of YHWH as creator (e.g. 40: 12-31,42: 5,44: 24,45: 9-13, 18, 47: 13, 51: 13, 16)-even of a new heaven and new earth (65: 17), and emphasize that the wrath of the past will ‘never again’ recur (cf. הָרַקְתָּן, ְנָכָה, 51: 22, 52: 1, 54: 4, 60: 18-20, 62: 4, 65: 19-20).” Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 374. “The OT displays a hermeneutical progression in which, on the one hand, sacred accounts of God's acts in the past provided models for later accounts of his present and future activity and, on the other hand, the received sacred literature was from time to time conformed to its contemporary or future application and fulfillment. The first aspect of the process is evident in the way in which the prophets 'placed the new historical acts of God… In exactly the same category as the old basic events of the canonical history': a new creation, a new Exodus, a new covenant, a new Davidic kingdom, a new Zion or Temple. It is also present in the Psalms (e.g. 8, 68, 106, 136) in which the appeal or praise for God's present or future help is keyed to his past acts of redemption. It represents a typological correspondence that is not a mere cyclical repetition but rather a progression in which the new surpasses the old. The process appears to embody a canonical principle as well. That is, inspired prophetic writings are received as normative for the faith and worship of the community as they are recognized to be valid contemporary expressions of an abiding supplements to the ancient election and covenantal traditions. As we hope to show in the following essay, the early Christians' understanding of the OT and its actualization in their own time and community stands within the same perspective.” E. Earle Ellis, “The Old Testament Canon in the Early Church,” in Mikra, ed. Martin Jan Mulder (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 686–687.
Jeremiah

and they will not say any longer,22

‘Living Yahweh,23 who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,’

15 for if Yahweh is living who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north
and from all the lands where they were exiled,
then I will return them to the grounds which I gave to their fathers.24

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22 "… God's fallibility, as the flood story reveals, is that he has created a fallible humanity. For just this reason, prophetic visions of the postexilic 'new age' often include notions of the inauguration of a new moral and religious regime. Such visions often include formulae that distinguish current practice from future transformation: for example, 'In those [future] days, no longer shall they say… but rather…' (Jeremiah 3:16; 23:7-8; 31:29-30; cf. 16:14-15; Ezekiel 18:2). The new regime nonetheless presupposes the continuing validity of divine law. Change lies in the divine reprogramming of human nature, as if to enable – or perhaps coerce – fallible human beings to heed God's infallible law: 'I will set my Torah within them; upon their heart will I write it' (Jeremiah 31:33; similarly, Ezekiel 36:27)." Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel*, 47-48.

"The first type of aggadic reformation, which put its stress on the newness of the *traditio* and the 'pastness' of the *traditum*, envisages new religio-cultural realities in the New (post-exilic) Age. In particular, as noted earlier, the teacher explicitly contrasts the old with the new: this may relate to the non-existence of the Ark, to new modes of divine punishment, or to the internalization or inner knowledge of the *Torah's* teachings (cf. Jer. 3: 16-17,31: 28-9,30-2,33). By these means, the epochal rift between the past and present is acknowledged and stressed; but while the traditions of the past constitute the orientating memories of the present, they are nevertheless relegated to the cultural-historical background. It is the new future that is stressed; and its discontinuity with 'former days' is emphatically highlighted. Aggadic exegesis serves, in such cases, as the hinge between the one and the other, swinging the door which closes on memory and opens towards hope. By contrast, and far more pervasive and culturally fundamental, is that mode of aggadic reformation which seeks to envisage the future in the light of the past, and thereby affirm continuity between past and present as the sure link between memory and hope. The technique generally employed to achieve this end is that of typology, which, as noted, projects paradigmatic images of the past into the present and future, and sees these as reshapings and renewals of foundational actions, scenarios, or topoi of the ancient past. Notably, for the present inquiry, these images generally emerge in times of crisis. Thus, after the northern exile Micah (7: 15), Isaiah (11: 11-16), and Jeremiah (16: 14f. -23: 7 f.) refer to a new exodus and return; or, comparably, after the southern exile the prophets Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 43: 16-21,51: 9-11) and Ezekiel (ch. 20) project a new exodus in order to bridge the contemporary crisis of historical discontinuity. Similarly, in response to the spatial dislocation of this same southern exile, prophets like Ezekiel (47:1-12), Joel (4: 18), and Zechariah (14: 7-11) envisage the relocation of a sacred centre in Jerusalem, at the Temple mount. Many other images were employed typologically, ranging from the creation itself to historical personages and their exploits in *illud tempus*, in order to convey the fundamental continuity linking contemporary Israel in crisis with the Israel of sacred memory. Here, as in the preceding paragraph, aggadic exegesis serves to link the past with the present and future, only now the *traditio* is regarded as a reactualization of the *traditum*, and not its replacement; and the *traditum* does not serve as the backdrop and foil for a discontinuous *traditio*, but is rather the screen upon which national hope and renewal is contextualized, even imagined." Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 412-413.

23 The phrase... occurs at the beginning of an oath. Yahweh is invoked as the guarantor of the oath." Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 409.
16 Behold, I am sending many to be fishermen. Utterance of Yahweh!

And they will catch them, and afterwards, I will send many to be hunters, and they will hunt them from upon every mountain and from upon every hill and from the crevices of the cliffs.

17 For my eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hidden from my presence, and their iniquities are not concealed from before my presence.

18 But first I will finish [off] double their iniquities and their sins, on account of their defiling my land. With a dead body, their vilenesses and their detestable things, they filled my inheritance.

24 "These verses are an almost exact equivalent of 23:7-8, where they appear to fit neatly into a context. At first sight they appear to interrupt an argument which is concerned with the judgment that will fall on the people of Judah in their land. Because these verses refer to a future restoration to the land and envisage a new Exodus, not this time from Egypt but from lands to the north to which the people have been exiled, many commentators have regarded them as exilic and origin but inserted here by a later editor to indicate the outcome of the promised judgment of earlier verses. While this view cannot be ruled out on any a priori grounds, it is probably wise to recognize that references to exile by no means requires that an exile had taken place. Exile was recognized at an early date as one of the possibilities that followed inundation. Over a century earlier the northern kingdom had known a partial exile. For those already in exile return from foreign soil was always hope for, and it is not impossible some exiles have returned." Ibid.

25 "The pronoun them is identified in TEV as "these people" and in GECL as "the people of Judah." GECL in fact translates catch them as "catch the people of Judah like fish." Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 392. "When Jesus used the metaphor of fishermen to describe the mission of his disciples (Mark 1:17; Matthew 4:19), he was reversing its meaning from that intended by Jeremiah." Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:219. But if this refers to the Lord's actions and bringing them out of exile to prepare the return them to their land, then Jesus' words refer to the disciples' task of preaching to Israel in exile, probably part of the stimulus in the early church to reach the Jews first in synagogues throughout the empire.

26 "The Hebrew of this verse has the word "first" near the beginning, but RSV follows the Septuagint, which deletes it. A number of translations either omit this word or else assume that it will be understood in their rendering (TEV, NIV, GECL, MFT, AT). HOTTP recommends that it be retained in translation, since it is an integral part of the Hebrew. It is best understood as indicating that in this verse the LORD is saying what he will do to the people before he delivers them, as promised in verses 14 and 15." Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 393.

27 "(Ex. 22:4, 7, 9; Is. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; 17:18; Zech. 9:12). The double recompense was according to the Levitical law." Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, bk. Rev. 18:16.

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| Jeremiah to Yahweh | 19 Yahweh,  
|                  | my strength  
|                  | and my protection  
|                  | and my refuge in the day of trouble,²⁹  
|                  | to you the nations will come from the end of the earth,³⁰  
|                  | and they will say,  
|                  | ‘Surely, they possessed a lie.’  

| People? Nations? | our³¹ fathers are vanity,  
|                  | and in them is no value.’  
|                  | 20 Why does a man make for himself gods,  
|                  | and they are not gods?³²  

| Yahweh to Jeremiah | 21 Therefore, behold,  
|                   | I am making them know –  
|                   | because of his conduct,  
|                   | I will make them know  
|                   | my hand,  
|                   | and by my power,  
|                   | and they will know that my name is Yahweh.”  

²⁸ "There can be no question that the idea that Canaan was Yahweh's land, 'Yahweh's hereditary possession' (יהוהנַחֲלָה), is very ancient, and very soon after the entry it certainly became the common property of the amphictyonic clans [Note: Exodus XV.17; I Samuel XXVI.19; II Samuel XIV.16; Jeremiah II.7, XVI.18, L.11; Psalms LXVIII.10 [9], LXXIX.1; cf. Joshua XXII.19. H. Wildberger, 'Israel und sein Land,’ in Evangelical Theology 1956, pp. 404ff.] von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, 299.

²⁹ "These terms occur often in the Psalms (e.g., 18:3-4 [English 2-3]; 28:1, 7-8; 59:11, 18-19 [English 10, 17-18]) and elsewhere in the OT to express the confidence of Israel and God. Jeremiah needed to send this kind of support behind him.” Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 414.

³⁰ "This theme is mentioned in other prophetic books (see Isaiah 2:2-4; 18:7; 19:19-25; Zechariah 8:20-23; 14:16; Malachi 1:11) but is rare in Jeremiah." Craigie, Kelly, and Drinkard, Jr., WBC 26, 26:219. But if the "hunting" and "fishing" referred to above refers to God's actions in bringing the exiles back to their homeland, then this refers to a new Exodus that includes both Jew and Gentile in a new reality.

³¹ “…a first-person liturgical voice breaks into divine speech to address YHWH in loyalty and confidence…” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 16:1.

³² "… They are called in Scripture (according to the truth of the matter) 'gods who are not gods' (2 Chronicles 13:9). The reference here is to those who would consecrate themselves to be priests of what were 'no-gods,' by no means God. See also Jeremiah 2:11… The same words are repeated in chapter 16:20… These are the so-called gods about which the Apostle speaks in 1 Corinthians 8:5.” John Owen, Biblical Theology, or the Nature, Origin, Development, and Study of Theological Truth, in Six Books, ed. William Goold, trans. Steven P. Westcott, reprint of 1661 Oxford edition [Latin] (Pittsburgh: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1994), 446.
Table 12: Jeremiah 17

| Scribe/Jeremiah/Yahweh? | 1 The sin of Judah is inscribed with a pen of iron, with a stylus-point of diamond it is engraved upon the stone tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars,1 2 while their sons are remembering their sacrifices and their Asherahs2 upon a tree,3 |

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1 "Though they functioned to provide a means to secure the wood and animals on the altar, they were also where the blood of the animal was dabbed to purify the altar from defilement. The imagery suggests that the sins of Judah will be permanently inscribed there, with the result that sacrifices cannot expunge them.” Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, The IVP Bible Background Commentary, bk. Jer 17:1.

2 "This late eighth-century BCE epitaph appears on a slab of limestone recovered in 1967 after having been looted from a cave-tomb at the site of Khirbet el-Qom, about eight miles west of Hebron in the Judaean hills. The slab was originally part of a pillar adjoining one of the burial chambers in the tomb. The interpretation of the inscription, which is rather crudely written and not deeply incised, is hampered by the fact that much of the text has been retraced, with the result that many letters appear twice, sometimes superimposed on each other, so that it is often difficult for the epigraphist to decide which letters to read and which to ignore. The text surmounts a deeply incised representation of an inverted human hand, which, though it resembles the common Islamic talisman known as “the hand of Fatima,” seems to have been in place before the Iron Age inscription was carved around it. ‘Uriyahu, the rich1: (This is) his inscription. Blessed was Uriyahu to Yahweh,a and from his enemies,2 b by his asherah,3 c he saved him.d (Written by?) ʾOniyahu.4.” P. Kyle McCarter, “Khirbet El-Qom (2.52),” in Context of Scripture, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 2 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2003), sec. 52.

“A number of Hebrew inscriptions, primarily religious in content, were found in excavations conducted during the 1970’s by Ze’ev Meshel for the Tel Aviv Institute of Archaeology at the site of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, a major crossroads in the northeastern Sinai. The inscriptions were found in the ruins of the better preserved of the two buildings found at the site, which have been dated archaeologically to the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eighth century BCE. Among the most important artifacts were two large pithoi bearing a number of inscriptions and other graffiti. The first pithos is decorated with various drawings, including a pair of ibexes feeding on a stylized tree of life, a cow suckling a calf, a partially preserved lion, and, of special interest, a pair of human-bovine figures in the traditional pose of man and wife, king and queen or god and consort. This last illustration appears immediately below and partially overlapping the blessing translated below. Though it has been vigorously argued that the two figures are representations of the Egyptian god Bes (Beck 1982:27–31; Hadley 1987:189–196; Keel and Uehlinger 218–223), the unmistakable bull’s head, hooved feet and tail of the larger figure argue decisively in favor of interpreting him as the “Yahweh of Samaria” invoked in the adjacent inscription (cf. “the young bull of Samaria” in Hos 8:6), while the female breasts of the smaller figure, who stands slightly behind Yahweh and interlocks her arm with his (cf. Weippert 1988: 673), is evidently “his asherah.” Utterance of ʾAshyaw the king1 a: “Say to Yehallel and to Yawʿ asah and to […] ‘I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria2 and his asherah3c!” P. Kyle McCarter, “Kuntillet ʿAjrud (2.47),” in Context of Scripture, ed. William W Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, vol. 2 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2003), sec. 47.
flourishing upon their high hills.

| Yahweh | 3 My mountain is in the field, 
your⁴ strength, 
al all your treasury-rooms, 
I will give to be plunder, 
your hills [are] in sin in all your boundaries. 
4 And you stumbled, 
both from your inheritance which I gave to you, 
and I brought your enemies in a land which you did not know to you, 
for you kindled a fire in my anger, 
until eternity it will be kept burning.⁵ |

“The second pithos from Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, like the first, is decorated with a number of drawings, including a cow, an archer with his bow drawn, and a group of five human figures, standing with their hands extended as if in worship or supplication. The pithos also bears four separate inscriptions. First is a complete Hebrew abecedary, with the letters pe and ʿayin reversed from their traditional order, as also found in the early twelfth-century BCE ostraca from ‘Izbet Šarḥah and occasionally in the Bible (Prov 2:16–17; 3:46–51; 4:16–17; 31:25–26 [LXX]; cf. Ps 34:16–17); cf. COS 1.107. Second, adjoining the drawing of the supplicating figures, is a list of names: Shakanyaw, ‘Amoṣ, Shamaryaw, ‘Eliyaw, ‘Uzziyaw and Miṣray. The third and fourth inscriptions are translated here. A Fragmentary Blessing (lines 1–3) […] to Yahweh of the Teman1 a and his asherah.b And may he grant (?) everything2 that he asks from the compassionate god3 c […] and may he grant according to his needs4 d all that he asks!5 A Message of Blessing (lines 1–10) Utterance of ‘Amaryaw, “Say to my lord: ‘Is it well with you?e I bless you by Yahweh of Teman7 f and his asherah. May he bless you and keep you,g and may he be with my lord!’”h”

Ibid., sec. 47b.

³ “The Asherim were wooden objects representing the goddess Asherah (TEV “the symbols that have been set up for the goddess Asherah”). GECL translates “sacred poles,” with a reference to the glossary note under “Asherah,” who is defined as a Phoenician-Canaanite fertility and vegetation goddess. This is the only place in Jeremiah where the word is used.” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 398.

⁴ Singular, probably referring to Jeremiah again? Or personified Israel?

⁵ These first 4 verses do not appear in the LXX. Dillard and Longman, An Introduction to the Old Testament, 293n. That may well reflect a theological perspective of the Alexandria group: "Israel's obligation to Yahweh was basically, 'I thought you would call me "Father" and not turn away from following me' (Jeremiah 3:19; cf. 2:8; Psalm 105:43-45). Although the land was the gift of grace to Israel, the covenant people could only abide or stay within the land of God if they would obey the Lord (see Deuteronomy 4:40; Isaiah 1:19). The gift cannot be received without its Giver. Without this theological dimension or condition, Israel's political existence could not be the Israel of God, the theocracy. When Israel became persistently unfaithful to its covenant God, the Lord therefore took His inheritance back from Israel (Jeremiah 17:1-4; 15:13-14). That means, in the Old Testament, Israel's dispersion among the Gentiles and the destruction of the land (Isaiah 1:5-9; Jeremiah 4:23-26). With the rejection of Israel, as the faithless nation, God bless also rejected its land is no longer under His blessing. Israel's existence as the theocracy is inseparably tied to its dwelling in the land of Palestine. Exile of Israel was caused by God's withdrawal of His covenant blessing. This truth is confirmed by God's gracious promise of a 'new covenant' with all the 12 Tribes, in conjunction with the promise of a new Exodus from the land of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, a new settling in the land of the forefathers (Jeremiah 30 and 32), and the coming of the Messiah, the greater David (Jeremiah 23:5, 6). These astounding promises of Jeremiah reveal that God's
Psalmist/Sage

5 Thus said Yahweh, “Cursed is the man


6 “…the introductory verses of the Psalter have a strongly Deuteronomic flavour to them, with a particular focus on the law. The torah is central and true godliness is based upon its study. The purpose of this study is to be equipped to live by Yahweh's torah—not to stray from it either to the right or to the left (cf. Deut 17:20; Jos 1:8)--and such a lifestyle (יִדְרֶּךָ) is the essence of true faithfulness, according to the introduction to the Book of Psalms. The Deuteronomic overtones continue into verse three with a simile which the effects of life grounded in the torah of Yahweh. The blessed man likened to "a tree planted by streams of water"…, a which is immediately reminiscent of another well-known Deuteronomistic Jer 17:7-8. In Jeremiah it is the man who trusts in Yahweh (v.11;'l') is described as being "like a tree planted by water" which is conceptually similar to the blessing formula found in Ps 2: 12 (1) "Blessed are all who take refuge in him"), which is closely linked with Ps 1 (by way of the inclusion). The similarities between these two passages are marked:

Ps 1

אַשְׁרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַגֹּשְׁה הַקָּצָן שְׁחֵרוּת
עַלְפֵי לַיְלָה מֵי
פָּרָה יֵשׁ קֶשֶׁת

Jer 17

כְּהֹן תְּכֵן
לְהָקַח קָצָן שְׁחֵרוּת
לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל
כְּפָרָה יֵשׁ קֶשֶׁת

Whilst the lexical links are not always exact, the metaphor is essentially the same: The person who is blessed by God (the torah-keeper of Ps I or the one who trusts in Jer 17) is like a tree planted by water, denoting permanence, protection and fruitfulness. The Psalm I-Jeremiah 17 association is significant…. Whilst the exact nature of the relationship between Jeremiah and Deut/DtrH is undoubtedly complex, this prophetic book appears to borrow Dtr concepts and language in its explanation of the exile and its presentation of the hope of restoration and renewal.23 Jeremiah's explanation of the exile is based in the rejection of the torah of Yahweh (Jer 29:9–23; 32:23 etc.), and, equally, the promise of restoration is connected with the keeping of the torah (this time as a result of Yahweh's divine help, Jer 31:33). Just as the exilic/post-exilic Book of Jeremiah draws upon Dtr theological concepts both in explanation of the past and in giving hope for the future, could it be that a similar connection with Deuteronomy is being drawn in the final, post-exilic redaction of the Book of Psalms?” Jamie A Grant, The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms, vol. 17, Academia Biblica (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 49, 50. “The poetic form of wisdom is manifest in the antithetical construction of vv. 5–8—and not just the form but the mode and substance of its thought as well. Distilling from experience fundamental truths of life, wisdom propounds a doctrine of man. Here an anthropocentric anthropology is spurned and a theocentric one endorsed, since the one leads to curse while the other to blessing. This corresponds with similarly formulated sage-like statements in the Psalms: e.g. ‘Happy the man who takes refuge in Yhwh’ (Ps 34:9), and ‘Happy the man who puts his trust in Yhwh’ (Ps 40:5). And underlying such statements is the basic wisdom principle, ‘The steps of a man are from Yhwh’ (Ps 37:23), i.e. ‘A man’s mind plans his way, but Yhwh directs his steps’ (Prov 16:9). Now, as we saw in an earlier chapter, Jeremiah affirmed the very same principle when he confessed ‘that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps’ (10:23), and we noted then that this affirmation contributed to the depiction of the prophet in chs. 8–10 as a paradigm of wisdom. A similar depiction is underway here. Indeed, it is a perfect expression of the wisdom maxim in 10:23 when in the Confession of ch. 17 Jeremiah claims Yhwh as his hope (v. 13), his praise (v. 14), and his refuge (v. 17)—
who is trusting in humanity,
and placed flesh as his arm,
and from Yahweh his heart turned aside, 8
6 and he will be as a bush in the desert
and he will not see that good is coming,
and he dwelt in the lava fields
in the desert,
a land of salt,
and he will not inhabit.
7 Blessed is the man who is trusting in Yahweh

in short, as his trust and confidence. From the vantage point of the wisdom poem, in other words,
Jeremiah’s Confession articulates the trust in Yhwh that characterizes one as ‘blessed’ and, by implication,
as wise. Now, as much as vv. 5–8 fit a wisdom pattern, there are some peculiarities. To be sure, we have
already cited two psalms that display the formula used in v. 5 and 7: namely, adjective + haggeber + finite
verb + object. To these may be added Pss 94:12, 127:5, and numerous others which show only slight
variations of the formula. 58 However, while many of these include a negative contrast, never does the
contrast use the word ‘cursed’ (ārûr). Moreover, in all cases the positive term is ‘āsher, ‘happy’, not bārûk,
‘blessed’. As it turns out, the ‘ārûr/bārûk antithesis is primarily found not in the wisdom literature but in
the covenant sanctions of Deut 27–28. Significantly, Jer 11:3 employs ārûr with bērît, ‘covenant’, in the
formulaic pattern of 17:5:

kōh ‘āmar Yhwh ‘ĕlōhē yīrâ’ā’ēl

‘ārûr hā‘iš ‘āsher lō’ yiṣma ‘et-dibrê habberî hazzō’i

Thus says Yhwh, God of Israel:

Cursed is the man who heeds not the words of this covenant.

Further, like 11:3, 17:5–8 begins with the messenger formula. The point is that wisdom and
covenantal/prophetic speech forms have intersected in our passage. The universal scope of the one has been
qualified (but by no means negated) by the historical particularity of the other. A subtle but significant
semantic shift is thereby effected. What at first glance would seem to be the empirical observations of
wisdom are in fact a divine pronouncement by which a covenant norm is invoked and its curse and blessing
are activated.” Polk, The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self, 146–147.

7 “vv. 5–8 contain a poem of two stanzas with strong resemblances to Ps 1, a wisdom psalm
(Holladay 1962), recast in Deuteronomistic terms of covenant blessing and curse (Polk 1984: 145) and put
in YHWH’s mouth. In an unusual arrangement, curse precedes blessing (cf. Ps 1).” Barton and Muddiman,

8 “G von Rad’s study of the ‘Levitical Sermon’ pioneered the study of citation of Scripture in the
speeches of Chronicles. However, there is need for refinement in von Rad’s approach. For instance, von
Rad asserts that 2 Chronicles 32.7 is ‘quoted from Joshua X.25’ and that verse 8a ‘depends unmistakably on
Jeremiah XVII.5’ (‘The Levitical Sermon’, 274). Although the sequence in verse 7 does match exactly
Joshua 10.25, the general expression ‘Be strong and do not fear’ is so common that it is impossible to claim
a direct quote. Similarly, יָזִירָ֖יֶר does not match Jeremiah 17.5 exactly. It is such a brief reference that it is
impossible to be certain that the Chronicler was aware of the Jeremiah and text in using this reference.
Rather, the Chronicler makes use of biblical language and motifs.” Schniedewind, The Word of God in
Transition, 86n.
| Scribe            | 9 Deceitful is the heart more than anything,⁹ 
|                  | and it is weakened; 
|                  | how can they know?¹⁰ |
| Yahweh           | 10 I, Yahweh, 
|                  | am exploring the heart,¹¹ 
|                  | testing the inward parts, 
|                  | in order to give to each man 
|                  | according to his way, 
|                  | according to the fruit of his deeds.¹² |
| Sage             | 11 A partridge cared for chicks 
|                  | and she did not bear, 
|                  | making wealth 
|                  | but not legally; 
|                  | in the middle of his day he will abandon him, 
|                  | and in his future will be foolishness. |
| People           | 12 A throne of glory,¹⁴ |

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⁹ “Phrases with הֵם may also follow stative verbs….The heart is most deceitful of all things.” Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 271.

¹⁰ “… We seldom find theological reflection on 'sin' as a religious phenomenon of the utmost complexity [note: Genesis VI.5, VIII.21; Jeremiah XIII.23, XVII.9; Psalms XIV.2f., CXVI.11; Job XIV.4 are generally referred to in the older text-books.].” von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I*, 1:154.

¹¹ “The language of v. 10 plays upon and reinterprets Jeremiah’s first confession (12:1–4) where he protests divine injustice and asks YHWH to test his heart (לֵב) and establish his innocence (12:3). YHWH meets Jeremiah’s demand (v. 10) by announcing a reversal of fortunes for the unjust (v. 11, cf. v. 3).” Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer 17:1.

¹² “Now and then his Christian faith seems to have dictated the wording to the [Latin] translator. Thus he renders – against the MT and LXX – the keyword in the clause 'the fruit of his deeds' (Jeremiah 17:10): cogitatio 'a thought, design'; thus the prophet's saying comes to mean that God who searches the heart, giveth every man according to his inner thoughts…” Benjamin Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, ed. Martin Jan Mulder (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 313.


¹⁴ "The rendering thronus virtutis [in the last translation] 'a mighty throne' (ib. 17:12)… may be based on 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 9 where 'glory' and 'might' are combined…” Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” 313.
| Jeremiah | exalted from the beginning  
is the place of our\textsuperscript{15} sanctuary,  
13 The hope of Israel is Yahweh;  
anyone abandoning You will be ashamed,\textsuperscript{16}  
Scribe | their corruptions in the land have been written down,  
for they abandoned the source of living waters,  
Yahweh.  
Jeremiah | 14 Heal me, Yahweh, and let me be healed;  
save me and let me be saved,  
for my praise are you.  
15 Behold, they are saying to me,  
"Where is the word of Yahweh going, please?"  
16 But I was not hastening away from shepherding after you;  
and the day of being made weak I did not crave;  
you, you know the going-forth of my lips;  
before your face it came about.  
17 Do not let ruin come about to me;  
my refuge are you in the day of evil.  
18 Let those who are pursuing me be ashamed  
and let not me be ashamed, [not] me!  
Let them, them be dismayed  
and let not me be dismayed!\textsuperscript{17}  
Yahweh | I am bringing upon them a day of evil,  
and let a double destruction destroy them!  
Jeremiah | 19 Thus said Yahweh to me,  
"While going,  
then you shall stand  
in the gate of the sons of the city  
where the kings of Judah are going in and going out,  
and in all the gates of Jerusalem.  
20 And you will say to them,  
‘Hear the word of Yahweh,  
kings of Judah,  
and all Judah,  
\textsuperscript{15} note the plural. The plural of majesty, referring to Yahweh, or is this the voice of the people?  
\textsuperscript{16} “As an invocation coupled with a threat and reason, the passage is a blend of psalmic and prophetic, indeed Jeremianic, elements. The role of the speaker is equally striking. The one who praises Yhwh in the language of the people and as one of the people, and in praising manifests the trust and confidence normative for the people’s praying, is also the particular individual chosen to convey to the people Yhwh’s word of judgment against them at a specific moment in their history.” Polk, \textit{The Prophetic Persona: Jeremiah and the Language of the Self}, 134.  
\textsuperscript{17} “…may I not be confounded! (likewise Ps 25.2; 31.2, 18; 71.1)…” Joüon and Muraoka, \textit{A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.)}, sec. 114c. |
and all those dwelling in Jerusalem,\textsuperscript{18}
who are going in these gates:

21 Thus said Yahweh,
“Let it be guarded among your lives,\textsuperscript{19}
and do not bear a burden in the Sabbath day,
nor bring [it] in the gates of Jerusalem.
22 And do not bring out a burden from your houses in the
Sabbath day,\textsuperscript{20}
and you will do no work,
and you will sanctify the Sabbath day,
just as I commanded your fathers.
23 But
they did not listen
and they did not open their ears
and they hardened their necks
in order not to listen
and in order not to take discipline.
24 And it will come to pass,
if you will surely listen to me –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
in order not to bring a burden in the gates of the city in the
Sabbath day
and to sanctify the Sabbath day
in order not to do any work,

\textsuperscript{18} "This tripartite phrase was a stereotypical way of saying 'everyone'." Schniedewind, The Word of God in Transition, 116.

\textsuperscript{19} “ It is said in Deuteronomy 4:15, “Take heed to yourselves, lanupheshhuticam, to your souls.” here it is, benupheshhuticam, “in your souls;” but there, “to” or “for your souls,” as also in Joshua 23:11.” Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries, bk. Je 17:19.

\textsuperscript{20} “... The extension of the laws of the Sabbath is presented as that which 'I swore to your forefathers'...” Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 257.Fishbane notes the expansion of the Decalogue here, and just to to "...the need in ancient Israel to camouflage and legitimate its exegetical innovations." Ibid., 134. See his extended discussion on pages 129-134, 530-531. However, Fishbane gives another explanation that seems far more probable, and does not necessitate derogation of divine prerogatives on the part of Jeremiah: "A final category of legal reasoning to be found in inter-biblical exegesis may broadly be termed 'qualifying' in nature. Two distinct sub-types may be discerned within this rubric. The first may be designated 'qualification by cautelary procedure'. By this is meant the anticipation by the legal mind of loopholes or ambiguities in the rule of law, and logistic or juridical practice of closing off by a strict or lenient construction of its formulation. Such procedures are well known in the area of Roman jurisprudence... They also aptly characterize the incremental introduction of new restrictions not found in Exodus 23:11b and Jeremiah 17:21-22, for example." Ibid., 252–253. Geerhardus Vos, on the other hand, explains it this way: "... There are other prohibitions in the law, which by the very fact of their having not been incorporated in the Decalogue, are shown not to be universally applicable [Exodus 16.23; 34.21; 35.3; Numbers 15.32; cf. also Amos 8.5; Jeremiah 17.21]." Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments (Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans, 1948), 142.
25 then kings will go in the gates of the city, and leaders
dwelling upon the throne of David, riding in a chariot and on horses,
they and their princes, each man of Judah and those dwelling in Jerusalem;
and they will inhabit this city to eternity.

26 And they will come from the cities of Judah and from all around Jerusalem,
both from the land of Benjamin and from the land of Shephalalah,
and from the mountain and from the Negev, bringing
a burnt offering and a sacrifice and an offering and frankincense,
and bringing thanks to the house of Yahweh.

27 And if they do not listen to me to sanctify the Sabbath day,
and in order not to bear burden,
nor to go in the gates of Jerusalem in the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in her gates,
and it will devour the citadels of Jerusalem, and it will not be quenched.
Table 13: Jeremiah 28: The Critical Conflict

| Jeremiah | 28:1 And it came to pass in that year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month,¹ that Hananiah, son of Azur the prophet who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of Yahweh, to the eyes of the priests and all the people, saying, ² 2 “Thus said Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,³ saying ³ ‘I destroyed the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³ In the continuing two years days,⁴ I am returning to this place all the vessels of the house of Yahweh which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took from this place, and he carried them to Babylon. 4 And Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who went to Babylon I am returning to this place – Utterance of Yahweh! – For I will destroy the yoke of the king of Babylon.” |

¹ Here is one possibility for reconciling what seem to contemporary readers to be an obvious contradiction in v. 1. "Some interpreters have been troubled by the mention of the fourth year of Zedekiah as the 'beginning of his reign' (literally Hebrew; NIV, 'early in the reign'; LXX omits this), which lasted 11 years. However, according to Jewish usage, the date was indeed the beginning of his rule, for the Jews divided periods of time into halves: beginning and end (Henderson, page 171). It means simply 'in the first half of his reign.'” Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 547. I think it is more likely that the mention of the “fourth year of Zedekiah” is a marker of judgment time, cf. Hill, “The Construction of Time in Jeremiah 25 (MT),” 150–151..

² Barton and Muddiman correctly note that conflict over God's will crystallizes in the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah. Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 27:1. However, the conflict does not go away with the death of Hananiah.

³ Childs observes that there is an additional element here, the abuse of God's name by whomever the open future proves false in her/his prophecies. Childs, Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments, 69.

⁴ “Since just over four years had already passed (v. 1), Hananiah predicts they will be gone no more than seven years. Contrast Jeremiah’s seventy years (25:11, 12).” The Reformation Study Bible: New King James Version, CD-ROM (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), bk. Jer 28:3.

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5 And Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet to the eyes of the priests and to the eyes of all the people who were standing in the house of Yahweh, 6 and Jeremiah the prophet said, “Truly,⁵ thus Yahweh will⁶ do: Yahweh will raise up your words which you prophesied to return the vessels of the house of Yahweh, and all the exiles from Babylon to this place. 7 Surely, please listen to this word which I am speaking in your ears and in the ears of all the people. 8 The prophets who were before me and before you from eternity, and they prophesied to many lands and upon great kingdoms in regard to war and in regard to evil in regard to pestilence. 9 The prophet who will prophesy in regard to peace, in the going of the word of the prophet, the prophet will be made known, what Yahweh sent him in the truth.” 10 And Hananiah the prophet to the yoke from upon the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, and he destroyed it. 11 And Hananiah said to the eyes of all the people, saying, “Thus said Yahweh, Thus I will destroy the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the time of the days of two years from upon the neck of all the nations,” and Jeremiah the prophet went on his way. 12 And the word of Yahweh came to pass to Jeremiah after Hananiah the prophet’s destroying the yoke from upon the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 13 “While going, you also will say to Hananiah, saying, ‘Thus said Yahweh, ‘Bars of wood you broke, and you made in place of them bars of iron.”

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⁶ Alternatively “may He do…” as a jussive. This appears also in the following phrase.
14 For thus said Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,
   “A yoke of iron I gave upon the necks of all these
   nations to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;
   and they served him;
   and, moreover, even the animal of the field I
gave to him.”

15 And Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet,
   “Please, listen, Hananiah.
   Yahweh did not send you
   and you, you have made his people trust upon deception.

16 Therefore, thus said Yahweh,
   ‘Behold, I am dismissing you from upon the face of
   the ground this year;
   you are dying;
   for a turning-aside you have spoken to Yahweh.”

17 And Hananiah the prophet died in that year, in the seventh month.
### Table 14: The Oracle to Baruch

| scribe | 45:1 The word which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch, son of Neriah, when he was writing these words upon the book in the presence of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, 7 son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2 “Thus said Yahweh, God of Israel, upon you, Baruch: 3 ‘You said, “Please, woe to me, for Yahweh added grief upon my pain; I am weary in my groaning, and I found no resting place.”’  
4 Thus you will say to him, “Thus said Yahweh, ‘Behold, what I built I am tearing down, and what I planted I am uprooting – and it is all the land!’” 5 And you, you are seeking great things for yourself. Do not seek! For behold, I am bringing evil upon all flesh – Utterance of Yahweh!” |

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7 The fourth year of Jehoiakim is an important time marker for judgment that appears repeatedly throughout the book. Hill, “The Construction of Time in Jeremiah 25 (MT),” 150–151.

8 “Like Jeremiah, Baruch utters a lament of sorrow, pain, and weariness (vv. 2–3) that follows upon the utterances of curses upon his own people (ch. 44).” Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 45:1.

9 As in the oracle against Jehoiachin, Calvin moralizes, although he mentions no specific fault. Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, bk. Je 45:1.

10 Thompson believes that God here express his own sorrow at what must happen. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 684. However, the larger connection seems to be to the beginning of the book, to Jeremiah's call. Dempster may over-interpret this passage, although much of this is attractive. “The first chapter in the second half of the Hebrew Bible describes Jeremiah’s role in terms that are probably true of all the prophets to follow: to uproot, to demolish, to destroy, to pull down, to build and to plant (Jer 1:10)...These words, which begin the second half of the Bible, echo God’s planting and building at the beginning of the first half of the Bible (Gen 2:8, 22)...By placing this chapter at the end of Jeremiah, it is clear that the building and planting have begun with Jehoiachin...” Stephen G. Dempster, “Geography and Genealogy, Dominion and Dynasty, A Theology of the Hebrew Bible,” in Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, Ill. : Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2002), 77–78.


12 “...no one seems quite sure of what the great things are. CEV translates this as ‘big plans’; but on the other hand NJB has ‘special treatment,’ and GECL follows the same interpretation for the whole question with ‘And should I make an exception for you?’” Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 837.
and I will give to you your life as war-booty, 
on account of all the places where you will go.”
| Scribe | 46:1 What came to pass, word of Yahweh,\(^{13}\) to Jeremiah the prophet, upon the nations.  
2 To Egypt,\(^{14}\) upon the might of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt,  
what came to pass upon the river Euphrates in Carchemish,  
whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, struck, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah.  
3 “Arrange shield and large shield and draw near to battle.  
4 Harness the horses  
and ascend the warhorses  
and station yourselves with helmets;  
polish the spears;  
put on the armor!  
5 Why do I see them dismayed, turned back to the rear?  
And their strongmen are being shattered,  
and they made escape,  
and they were not turned around;  
terror [is] surrounding\(^{15}\) –  
Utterance of Yahweh!  
6 Do not let the swift escape,  
and do not let the strongman slip away northward upon the side of the river Euphrates;  
they stumbled and they fell.  
7 Who is this?  
As the Nile he will arise;  
as the streams their waters will be shaken.  
8 Egypt as the Nile will arise  
and as the streams’ waters will be shaken |

\(^{13}\) Bright’s comment is apropos here: "It is probable that, of all parts of the book, the oracles against foreign nations are the least frequently read... Whatever the reasons for this neglect may be, it is nevertheless a pity, if only because these chapters contain some of the finest poetry in the entire prophetic Canon." Bright, Jeremiah, 1965, 21:307.  

\(^{14}\) Note the geographical movement from west to east. Further, as in the oracle against Jehoiachin, specific sins do not appear. Cf. Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 647. Note the similarity to the treatment of Jehoiachin as compared to the other kings in 21-22.  

\(^{15}\) Here, familiar prophetic metaphors appear where God is the aggressor, as appears even in the old J tradition. Cf. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, 2:124.
and he will say,
‘I will arise;
I will cover the land;
I will cause
the city to perish
and those dwelling in it.’

9 Ascend the horses
and let the chariot act like madmen!
And let the strongmen of Cush and Put go forth, taking hold of shield,
and Lydians taking hold, bending the bow.
10 And that day to Lord Yahweh of armies is a day of vengeance,
to avenge himself on account of his adversaries;
and the sword
will consume
and be satisfied
and be saturated
on account of blood,
for [there is] a sacrifice to Lord Yahweh of armies
in the land of the north,
at the river Euphrates.

11 Ascend Gilead and take balsam, virgin daughter of Egypt;
to nothing I will increase medicines;
healing is not yours.

12 The nations heard of your dishonor;
the Earth was full.
For strongman against strongman,
they stumbled;
together they fell, the two of them.”

13 The word which Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah the prophet,
to go to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to strike the land of Egypt.
14 “Declare in Egypt
and make them hear in Migdol
and make them hear in Noph and in Tahpanhes;
say,
‘Station yourself and establish yourself,’

---

16 Vos believes this refers to the multitude of angels. Vos, *Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments*, 243. However, could this not just as well refer, in the Jeremianic context, to the presence of the nations that surrounded Israel during the period of the Kings? In that case, perhaps Childs' explanation works better (Childs, “The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition.”).
for the sword will consume what is around you.

15 Why was your mighty man prostrated?

He did not stand,  
for Yahweh thrust him out.

16 The one stumbling was increased,  
moreover, he fell,  
each man to his neighbor,  
and they said,  
“Arise,  
and let us return  
to our people  
and to the land of our kindred,  
from before the sword which oppresses.”

17 They called out a roar there to Pharaoh, king of Egypt,  
he was brought over to the meeting.

18 “As I live –  
Utterance of the king, Yahweh of armies [is] his name –  
for as Tabor in the mountains and as Carmel in the sea  
they are going.

19 Articles of exile make for yourself, dweller in  
the house of Egypt,  
for Noph will become a waste and fall in ruins,  
from having no one dwelling [in it].

20 A beautiful heifer is Egypt –  
a horse fly from the north is coming, is coming!

21 Moreover,  
her hirelengs in her midst are as calves of the stall,  
for even they turned away,  
they fled together,  
they did not stand,  
for the day of their distress came upon them,  
the time of their visitation.

22 Her voice, as a serpent, will go,  
for in might they will go,  
and with axes they came to her as cutters of  
trees.

23 They cut her wood –  
Utterance of Yahweh! –  
for they will not be searched out,  
for they increased more than locusts,  
and there was no number for them.

24 The house of Egypt was put to shame:  
she was given into the hand of the people of north.”

25 Yahweh of armies, God of Israel, said,
“Behold, I am visiting
to Amon from Thebes
and upon Pharaoh
and upon Egypt
and upon her gods
and upon her kings
and upon Pharaoh
and upon those trusting in him.
26 And I will give them in the hand of those seeking their lives,
and in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon
and in the hand of his servants,
and afterwards she will be settled according to the former days –
Utterance of Yahweh!

Yahweh

27 And you,
do not fear, my servant Jacob,
and do not be dismayed, Israel,
for behold, I am delivering
you from a distant place
and your seed from the land of their captivity,
and Jacob
will return
and be quiet
and be at ease,
and will not be set trembling.
28 You, do not fear, my servant Jacob –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
for I am with you,
for I will make an end among all the nations where I thrust you away,
and I will not make with you an end,
and I will discipline you according to justice,
and I will surely not leave you innocent.

Scribe

47:1 What came to pass, word of Yahweh, to Jeremiah the prophet, to the Philistines,
before Pharaoh smote Gaza.
2 “Thus said Yahweh,
‘Waters are arising from the north17
and they will become an overflowing wadi,

---

17 Vos believes this is an eschatological reference in line with Isaiah 24:18 and 54:9, where the waters of Noah reappear as eschatological judgment. Cf. the longer discussion in Geerhardus Vos, *The Eschatology of the Old Testament*, trans. James T Dennison (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub, 2001), 82. This fits the idea of the foe from the north, in this case Yahweh as bringer of eschatological judgment.
and they will overflow
the land
and the entire contents of the city
and they will dwell in it
and humanity will cry out
and everyone who dwells in the land will howl,
3 from the sound of the stamping of hooves of his
mighty ones,
from the shaking of his chariot,
the roar of his wheels,
fathers will not turn back to their sons,
from the sinking of their hands,
4 on account of the day which is coming
to devastate all the Philistines,
to cut off Tyre and Sidon,
every survivor helping,
for Yahweh is devastating the
Philistines,
the remnant of the region
of Caphtor.
5 Baldness went to
Gaza;
Ashkelon was cut off,
the remnant of their
valleys, when will
you cut yourselves?”

Jeremiah/People 6 “Alas, sword of Yahweh,
how far will you remain undisturbed?
Be gathered to your sheath!
Be at rest
and grow silent!
7 How will you be quieted?”

Jeremiah And Yahweh commanded to it,
“To Ashkelon
and to the shore of the sea!”
there he appointed it.

Scribe 48:1 To Moab, thus said Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,
“Woe to Nebo,
for she was devastated,
she was put to shame.
Kiriathaim was captured.
The fortress
was put to shame
and was shattered.
2 Woe continually to the praise of Moab.
In Heshbon, they accounted evil upon her,
   ‘Go! Let us cut her down from nation[hood].’
Moreover,
   madmen will grow silent after you;
   the sword will come.
3 The sound of an outcry from Horanaim,
   ‘Violence and great destruction!’
4 Moab was destroyed;
   they were made to hear the outcry of her insignificance,
      5 for the ascent of Luhith in weeping –
         he will ascend weeping –
         for in the descent of Horonaim
      they heard the affliction of the outcry of breaking.
      6 ‘Flee! Escape with your lives,
           and let her be as a juniper in the wilderness.’
7 For because you trusted
   in your deeds
   and in your treasuries,
   even you will be captured,
   and Chemosh will go out in exile,
   his priests\(^\text{18}\) and his chiefs united.
8 And ruination is coming to every city
   and the city will not escape,
   and the valley will perish
   and the level place will be annihilated,”
                   which Yahweh said.
9 “Give salt to Moab
   for they will surely flee
   and her cities will become a waste
   from no one dwelling in them.
10 Accursed he is making the work of Yahweh –
   treachery and accursed –
   withholding his sword from blood.
11 Moab was put at ease from his youth
   and undisturbed was he in regard to his lees
   and he was not emptied out from vessel to vessel
   and in exile he did not walk;
      therefore,
      his taste was established in him
      and his odor was not changed.
12 Therefore, behold, days are coming –

Utterance of Yahweh! –
and I will send to him a tipping,
and they will tip him,
and his vessels they will empty out
and their skins they will dash to pieces.
13 And Moab will be ashamed more than Chemosh
   just as the house of Israel felt shame
   from Bethel, their confidence.
14 How can you say,
   “Strongmen are we
   and mighty men for battle”?
15 A devastator of Moab and her cities
   ascended
   and the best of his young men descended to
   slaughter –
Utterance of the king, Yahweh of armies is his name!
16 The distress of Moab is to draw near
   and his evil hastened exceedingly.
17 Totter to him,
   everyone surrounding him
   and all those knowing his name;
   say, “How the strong tribe, the staff
   of glory, was shattered!”
18 Descend from glory;
   sit in thirst, dweller of the house of Dibon,
   for a devastator of Moab ascended
   among you,
   spoiling your fortifications.
19 Stand at the road and keep watch, dweller
   of Aroer,
   inquire, please, and be delivered,
   say, “What is happening?”
   20 Moab was put to shame, for
   she shattered;
   howl and cry out,
   declare in Arnon, “A devastator of Moab!”
21 And judgment came to the land of the
   level place,
   to Holon, and to Yahats, and upon Mopaath,
22 and upon Dibon, and upon Nebo and
   upon Beth-Diblaim, 23 and upon

19 3 times מֹאָֽב
| Jeremiah         | 26 Make him drunk, for upon Yahweh he magnified himself, and Moab will slap in his vomit and will become a derision, even he! 27 And if Israel did not become a derision to you, if among thieves she was found – for from the sufficiency of your words in him, you tottered. 28 Forsake cities and settle down in cliffs, dwellers of Moab, and become as a dove making a nest in the regions beyond the mouth of the pit. |
| People          | 29 We heard the exaltation of Moab, exceedingly proud, his heights and his exaltation and his majesty and the haughtiness of his heart. |
| Yahweh          | 30 I, I know – Utterance of Yahweh! – his excess; and his empty talk is not right; they did not do right. 31 Therefore, on account of Moab, I will cause howling, and to Moab, all of him, I will cry out to the men of Kir-heres, “He will mourn!” 32 From weeping, Yaazer, I will weep in regard to you; the vine of Sibnah, your tentacles crossed over from sea |

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20 Against? Because of?  
22 “…the first question expects the answer “Yes,” while the second expects the answer “No”: Yes, the Moabites did make fun of Israel, but No, Israel was not a thief caught in a trap.” Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, 887. This is similar to the questions in the oracle against Jehoiachin.
Yaazer, they struck upon your fruit
and upon your vintage a destroyer fell.
And joy will be gathered [up/away],
and gladness from Carmel and from the land of Moab,
and wine from wine-vats will be made to cease,
he will not tread [the vats].
The shouting, the shouting, not the shouting!
From the outcry of Heshbon to Elealeh to Yahatz they gave their voices,
from Zoar to Horonaim, Eglat-shelishiyah,
for even the waters of Nimrim will become a devastation.
And I will cause Moab to be shattered –
Utterance of Yahweh!
– causing him to ascend a high place
and causing him to sacrifice to his gods.

Therefore,
my heart to Moab is growling as the flutes,
and my heart to the men of Kir-heres is growling is the flutes;
therefore, the riches he made will be destroyed.
For every head of baldness, and every beard will diminish,
upon all the hands [are] cutting,
and upon loins, sackcloth,
upon all the roofs of Moab and in her plazas everyone is wailing,
for I broke Moab as a vessel;
nothing of delight is in him –
Utterance of Yahweh!
“How she shattered!”
they are wailing.
“How Moab turned his back!”
“He is ashamed!”
And Moab will become a derision and a terror to everyone surrounding him.

Behold, as an eagle he is flying
and he spread out his wings to Moab.”
Kiriath was captured
and the stronghold was seized,
and the heart of the strongmen of Moab in that day became as the heart of a distressed woman.
And Moab was annihilated from being a people,
for upon Yahweh he was magnified.
43 Dread and a pit and a trap are upon you, dweller of Moab –
Utterance of Yahweh!

44 The refugee from the dread will fall into the pit
and he who ascends from the pit will be captured in the trap,
for I am bringing to her, to Moab, the year of their visitation –
Utterance of Yahweh!

45 In the shadow of Heshbon they stood,
from might they were fleeing,
for fire came from Heshbon
and the flame from between Sihon
and consumed the side of Moab
and the crown of the sons of uproar.

46 Woe to you, Moab,
the people of Chemosh perished,
for your sons were taken in captivity,
and your daughters in captivity.

47 And I will turn back the captivity of Moab in the latter days –
Utterance of Yahweh!23

Thus far24 is the judgment of Moab.

| Jeremiah | 49:1 To the sons of Ammon, thus said Yahweh, “The sons are nothing to Israel, if someone possesses nothing himself;25 why did their kings possess Gad and his people dwelt in his cities?26
  
2 Therefore, behold, days are coming –
Utterance of Yahweh!

– I will cause to be heard to Rabbah, the sons of Ammon, a blast of war and they will become |

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23 This is truly astounding. After 46 verses of severe condemnation, Yahweh announces blessings on the same terms as he did with his own nation! Cf. Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets*, 437–438.


25 i.e., for inheritance.

a mound,
a desolation,
and their daughters will kindle in fire,
and Israel will possess his possessing,”
says Yahweh.

3 Howl, Heshbon, for Ai was devastated;
cry out daughters of Rabbah;
gird yourselves in sackcloth;
wait and run about among the walls,
for their kings will go in exile,
his priests and his chiefs together.

4 What are you boasting of in the flowing valleys,
your valleys, daughter of backsliding,
who is trusting in her treasuries?
Who will come to me?

5 Behold, I am bringing upon you a visitation –
Utterance of Lord Yahweh of armies!
– more than all those surrounding you,
and you will be thrust, each man before the
faces,
and there will be no one gathering to
flee.

6 And afterward I will turn back the
captivity of the sons of Ammon –
Utterance of Yahweh!”

7 To Edom, thus said Yahweh of armies,
“There is no longer wisdom in Teman,
counsel perished,
those discerning rotted their wisdom.

8 Escape, turn back, make deep to dwell, dweller of Dedan,
for I am bringing the distress of Esau upon him,
the time of his visitation.

9 If those cutting off came to you,
they would not allow a gleaning to remain;
if thieves in the night,
they would ruin them sufficiently.

10 For I, I will strip Esau,
I will uncover his hiding place,
and he will withdraw himself;
he will not prevail;
he destroyed his seed,
and his brothers,
and his inhabitants,
and he is nothing.

11 Abandon your orphans;
I, I preserve life
and your widows will trust upon me.”

12 For thus said Yahweh,
  “Behold, [of] whom it is not their judgment to
drink the cup,\(^{27}\)
  they will surely drink it,
  and you will he surely leave
  unpunished?
  you will not be unpunished,
  for you will surely drink.

13 For by myself I have sworn –
  Utterance of Yahweh!
  – that to waste, to reproach, to drought, and to a
curse she will become,
  Bozrah and all her cities will become a
  waste eternally.”

14 I have heard a report from [being] with Yahweh,
  that idols among the nations were sent;
  “Gather together and go up to her,
  and arise for battle.

15 For behold,
  I gave you as small among the nations,
despised among humankind.
  16 Your horror beguiled you,
  the insolence of your heart was settling
  in the places of concealment,
  the cliff seizing the height of a hill,
  for\(^{28}\) you were exalted as an eagle;
  your nest from there was brought
down –
  Utterance of Yahweh!

17 And Edom became a waste;
everyone passing over upon her
will be appalled
and will hiss
on account of all her slaughter.
18 “As the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and her
neighbors,”

\(^{27}\) To “drink the cup” means to accept the Lord's judgment. Cf. the broader discussion in Leland Ryken et al., eds., “Drink, Drinking,” Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

\(^{28}\) “…י can be used for an unreal supposition: Jr 49.16 even if you soared like an eagle (like \(\text{ך} \) in the parallel Ob 4)” Joüon and Muraoka, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.), 593.
said Yahweh,
“No man will dwell there,
and no son of humanity will sojourn in her.”
19 Behold, as a lion perennially will ascend from the excellency of the Jordan to the shepherds-abode –
for let me make a twinkling –
I will make him run from upon her;
and what is chosen to her I will visit,
for who is like me?
And who summoned me?
And who is this shepherding who will stand before me?
20 Therefore they heard the counsel of Yahweh who gave counsel to Edom,
and his thoughts which he thought in regard to those dwelling in Teman,
“If you will not drag the little ones of the sheep,
if their shepherd will not be desolated on account of them.”
21 From the sound of their falling, the earth quaked,
an outcry in the Sea of Reeds; her voice was heard.
22 Behold, as an eagle
he ascended,
and he darted,
and he spread out his wings upon Bozrah,
and behold the heart of the strongmen of Edom in that day
as as the heart of a woman distressed.
23 In regard to Damascus, she felt shame;
Hamath and Arpad, because they heard a report of evil, they melted away in the sea of anxiety;
she was not able to show quietness.
24 Damascus sank,
she turned to flee
and panic prevailed;
distress and pains seized her as a woman bearing a child.
25 How have you not been forsaken, O city of praise, town of rejoicing?
26 Therefore, her young men will fall in her plazas,
and all the men of battle will perish in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh</th>
<th>27 And I will kindle fire in the wall of Damascus, and I will consume the citadels of the son of Hadad.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>28 To Kedar and to the kingdoms of Hazor which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, struck, thus said Yahweh, “Arise, ascend to Kedar and destroy the sons of the east. 29 Their tents and their cattle they will take, their curtains and all their vessels and their camels they will carry to them and they will call upon them fear from what surrounds. 30 Flee! Wander exceedingly! Make deep to dwell, dweller of Hazor – Utterance of Yahweh! – for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, counseled a counsel upon them and thought thoughts upon them. 31 Arise, ascend to the nation of his ease who is dwelling securely – Utterance of Yahweh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>He has no doors or bars. He dwells in isolation. 32 And their camels will become booty and the murmur of their cattle will [become] booty and I will scatter them to every wind, corners being cut off, and from all his regions beyond I will bring their distress – Utterance of Yahweh! 33 And Hazor will become a refuge of jackals, a waste for eternity; no man will dwell there and no son of humanity will sojourn in her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>34 What came to pass, a word of Yahweh, to Jeremiah to the Elamites in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, saying,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

29 Of the land.

30 Note the repetition of the root מֶלֶךְ
| 35 “Thus said Yahweh of armies,  
    ‘Behold, I am breaking  
    the bow of Elam,  
    the chief of their strongmen.  
36 And I will bring to Elam four winds from four ends of the heavens  
    and I will scatter them to all these winds  
    and no nation will come to pass who will not go there;  
    they are banished forever.  
37 And I will shatter Elam  
    before their enemies  
    and before those seeking their lives,  
    and I will bring to them evil,  
    the rage of my anger –  
    Utterance of Yahweh!  
    – and I will send after them the sword until I finish them.  
38 And I will place my throne in Elam,  
    and I will cause to perish from there king and chiefs –  
    Utterance of Yahweh!  
39 And it will come to pass in the latter days that I will return the captivity of Elam –  
    Utterance of Yahweh!  |
Table 16: Oracle Against Babylon: Jer. 50-51
| Narrator | 50:1  The word which Yahweh spoke to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet |
| Jeremiah | 2 “Declare among the nations and make them hear! Carry the standard! Make them hear! Do not conceal! Say, ‘Babylon was captured; Bel was ashamed; Meradoch was shattered; her image were put to shames; her idols\(^2\) shattered.’ 3 For a nation from the North ascended upon her; he established her land as a waste and there will be no one dwelling in her;\(^3\) from man to beast, they wandered, they walked. 4 In those days\(^4\) and at that time – Utterance of Yahweh! 5 The sons of Israel will go, they and the sons of Judah walking and weeping they will walk together, and they will seek out Yahweh their God. 5 They will ask the way to Zion, there their faces will go, and they will join themselves to Yahweh, an eternal covenant, which will not be forgotten. |

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1 McConville is one of the few commentators to delve deeply into the re-placement of the OAN in Jeremiah MT. McConville notes that they thus received pride of place. McConville, *Judgment and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah*, 148. We note as well the dominant theological principle: that Yahweh no longer relates to Israel and the nations based on the Deuteronomic code.

2 “… Not the usual Hebrew term for idols… Use many times in the OT but always in the plural, denotes 'logs,' 'blocks,' that is, shapeless things (BDB). Bright translates it 'godlets.' Ewald, after the rabbis, derisively renders 'dungy things.'” Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 674.

3 “… ('balls of excrement,' or the like) frequently applied to foreign gods, and in a special favorite of Ezekiel (nearly 40 times). May have been Isaiah who first called for in gods *"ilim* ('nothings,' or the like: a pun on *'elim*, *'elohim*); *gillulim* no doubt represents a further, and Kruger, extension of the pond. Similar puns are frequent in Jeremiah (cf. II 5, 8, 11, etc.).” Bright, *Jeremiah*, 1965, 21:353n.

4 The best succinct modern discussion of the degree to which Jeremiah's prophecies about Babylon were fulfilled can be found in Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, bk. Jer 50:2. Hermeneutically, the historical problem goes at least as far back as Calvin.

5 Using the prophetic perfect, the text pictures an already accomplished destruction, a common device in prophetic literature. Barton and Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary on CD-ROM*, bk. Jer 50:1–46. That is why treating this as a *vaticinum ex eventu* removes its savage beauty.

5 This may be a pointer to the messianic age to come. Cf. Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah*, 149.
6 Zion was perishing; it was my people they were shepherding, they made them err; the mountains were backsliding; from mountain to hill they went; they forgot their resting place. 7 All finding them devoured them, and their enemies said, ‘We are not guilty,’ in place of which they sinned against Yahweh, the abode of righteousness, and the hope of their fathers, Yahweh. 8 Wander from the midst of Babylon, and from the land of the Chaldeans go forth, and be as male goats before Zion. 9 For behold, I am rousing myself, and bringing up upon Babylon an assembly of great nations from the land of the North, and they will arrange against her; from there she will be seized; their arrows as a bereaved strongman will not return empty. 10 And the Chaldeans will become plunder, all her plunderers will be satisfied – Utterance of Yahweh! 11 For she will rejoice, for she will exult over those plundering my inheritance, for she will jump about as a heifer threshing, and she will cry shrilly as a mighty man.

6 אבד was specially used in connexion with strayed animals, I Samuel IX.3, 20; Jeremiah L.6 and frequently. Cf. also Genesis XX.13 (E).” von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, 1:166n.


12 Your mothers were exceedingly ashamed
and she who bore you will be abashed;
    behold, behind are the nations of the wilderness, drought, and
    desert-plain.
13 The wrath of Yahweh will not dwell,
    and the devastation of her entirety will come about;
    everyone crossing over upon Babylon will be appalled and will
    hiss on account of all her slaughter.
14 Arrange upon Babylon, surrounding all the roads;
    let the bow shoot arrows at her; do not spare in regard to the arrow,
    for against Yahweh she sinned.
15 Raise a shout against her round about.
    She set her hand!
    Her bulwarks fell; her walls were thrown down,
    for it is the vengeance of Yahweh.
Avenge yourselves against her;
    just as she did, do to her!
16 Cut down one sowing seed from Babylon,
    and one taking hold of a sickle in a time of harvest
    before the sword which oppresses;
    each one to his people they will turn,
    and each one to his land they will flee.
17 Flock Israel has been scattered
    lions thrust;
    the first one the king of Assyria consumed,
    and this one coming after – Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon broke his
    bones.’’
18 Therefore, thus said Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,
    “Behold, I am visiting to the king of Babylon and to his land
    just as I visited to the king of Assyria.
19 And I will turn Israel back to his abode,
    and they will shepherd Carmel and Bashan and the hill
    country of Ephraim and Gilead;
    his life will return.
    20 In those days and in that time –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
    it will be sought –
    the iniquity of Israel and his vanity and the sin
    of Judah
    – and they will not find,
    for I will give pardon to what I caused to remain.
21 Upon the land of Merathaim, ascend upon them, and to
    those dwelling in Pekod, strike down, and exterminate after
    them –
Utterance of Yahweh! –
And do according to all which I commanded you.
22 A voice of war is in the land, and a great breaking.
23 How the forge-hammer was cut down and broken, all the land!
How Babylon became a waste among the nations!
24 I lured you, and, moreover, you were captured, Babylon, and you, you did not know you were found and, moreover, you were seized,
for you engaged in strife against Yahweh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrator</th>
<th>25 Yahweh opened his treasury and brought forth vessels of his indignation, for it was a business for Lord Yahweh of armies in the land of the Chaldeans.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Yahweh | 26 Go to her from a remote place; open her granaries; cast her out as heaps of rubbish and exterminate her.
Do not allow a remnant to be hers.
27 Strike all her bulls; descend to slaughter;
Alas upon them, for it came in the daytime, a time of their visitation.
28 A sound of those escaping and refugees from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of Yahweh our God, the vengeance of his palace.
29 Make Babylon hear archers, all those bending the bow; encamp upon them round about;
there will be no escape;
make a completion with her according to her work;
according to all which they did, do to her,
for she is acting proudly in regard to Yahweh, in regard to the Holy One of Israel.
30 Therefore, her young men will fall, and all her men of battle will be destroyed in that day – Utterance of Yahweh! |
| Narrator | 31 Behold I, in regard to you, am insolence – Utterance of Lord Yahweh of armies – for your day came, the time of your visitation.
32 And insolence will stumble and will fall and he will have no one to raise him up, and I will kindle a fire in his cities and I will consume everything surrounding him.” |
| Yahweh | 33 Thus said Yahweh of armies, “Those who have been oppressed, the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah together, |
and all those who have taken them captive, will be strengthened among them; they refused to send them away.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nations</th>
<th>34 He who is redeeming them is mighty, Yahweh of armies is his name, he will surely contend for their dispute in order to give rest to the land and to give a trembling to those dwelling in Babylon.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>35 A sword upon the Chaldeans – Utterance of Yahweh! – And to those dwelling in Babylon and to her chiefs and to her wise men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36 A sword to the false prophets, for they will become foolish; a sword to her mighty men, for they will be shattered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37 A sword to his horses and to his chariots and to all the mixed company which is in her midst, for they will become as women; a sword to her treasuries, for they will be taken as spoil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38 A drought to her waters and they will dry out, for it is a land of idols, and among the terrors they will act like madmen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39 Therefore, wild beasts will dwell with jackals, and daughters of the ostrich will dwell in her, and she will not dwell any longer to perpetuity, and she will not settle down any longer, generation after generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 As the overthrow of God with Sodom and Gomorrah and with your neighbors – Utterance of Yahweh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 Behold, a people is coming from the North, and a great nation and many kingdoms will be awakened from the remote parts of the earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42 Bow and dart will be strengthened; they are cruel and have no compassion;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Against?  

11 Patrick Miller believes that inhospitality and rejection of strangers is the cause for this act of divine destruction. Patrick D. Miller, “Israel as Host to Strangers,” in Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 267 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 556. However, according to Jeremiah's instructions to the exiles, Babylon was hospitable to the people of God!  

12 "This section should be compared with 6:22-24 and 49:19-21. The lion (verse 44) now is Cyrus; in 49:19 it was Nebuchadnezzar." Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” 679.
| Nations | 43 The king of Babylon listened to what they heard and his hands sank; distress prevailed upon him, a writhing as a woman bearing a child.  
44 Behold, as a lion he ascends from the majesty of the Jordan to the abode of the steady stream, |
| Yahweh | for I will give rest,  
I will run them from upon her;  
and, who was chosen in regard to her?  
I will visit!  
For who is like me,  
and who will cause me to meet,  
and who is this shepherding who will stand before me?” |
| Jeremiah | 45 Therefore, hear the counsel of Yahweh,  
what he advised to Babylon,  
and his thoughts which he thought in regard to the land of the Chaldeans,  
if he will not drag them, the small of the flock,  
and if he will not ravage upon them, an abode,  
46 from the sound Babylon was captured  
the Earth was shaken  
and an outcry among the nations was heard. |
| Narrator | 51:1 Thus said Yahweh, |
| Yahweh | “Behold, I am being roused upon Babylon  
and to those dwelling in Leb-qamai, a ruining spirit.  
2 And I will send to Babylon strangers  
and they will scatter her  
and they will empty her land  
for they will be upon her from round about in the day of evil.  
3 Because the one treading his bow, will tread [it],  
and because he will lift himself, his armor,  
and will not hold back;  
and let you not show mercy to her young men;  
exterminate all her army. |
| Nations | 4 And those who were pierced fell in the land of the Chaldeans, |

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13 Fishbane notes the *atbash* techniques, but assumes that they relate to the tenuous political situation of Israel in exile. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 464. Thompson appropriately questions "… One would wonder why a writer would introduce the device at this point when Babylon has been referred to already." Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 749. However, if Bright is correct – and his argument makes sense – that these were all composed before the overthrow of Babylon, then it is possible that the oracles were originally written in *atbash*, and later revised with a few of the original words left intact to signify their origin.
and those pierced through in her streets.

5 For Israel and Judah are not a widow from their God, from Yahweh of armies, for their land was filled with offense more than the holy one of Israel.

6 Flee from the midst of Babylon and let each man’s life escape; do not perish in her iniquity, for it is a time of vengeance in regard to Yahweh; it is a recompense, a finishing off in regard to her.

7 A gold cup is Babylon in the hand of Yahweh; the entire land is drunk from her wine the nations drank, therefore they acted like madmen.

8 Suddenly Babylon fell and she broke; howl on account of her; take balsam for her pain; perhaps she will be healed.

9 They healed Babylon, but she was not healed; forsake her and go, each man to his land, for her judgment struck to the heavens and was lifted as far as the clouds.”

| Israel | 10 “Go forth, Yahweh our righteousness, go, and let me recount in Zion the work of Yahweh our God. |
| 11 Sharpen the arrows; fill the shields; Yahweh roused the spirit of the king of the Medes, for upon Babylon his purposes were to destroy her, for it was the vengeance of Yahweh, the vengeance of his palace. |
| 12 To the walls of Babylon, lift a standard; strengthen the guard; raise up those keeping watch; make firm those lying in wait, for Yahweh both thought and he did what he spoke to those dwelling in Babylon, |
| 13 settling upon the great waters, Rabbah of treasuries, your end came, the measure of your violent gain. |
| 14 Yahweh of armies swore by his life, |

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14 “The verb 'stir up' (‘wr) is an appropriately elusive one that does not specify how the hidden impetus of Yahweh operates… Jeremiah – whose anticipations for restore Jerusalem are vague and elusive – becomes the one from Yahweh his designated Cyrus as an agent of divine restoration.” Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*, 181.

15 “The Hebrew Bible ends with 'building and planting' made historically possible by Cyrus but made theologically credible by Jeremiah.” Ibid., 182.

“Except I fill you with humanity as a locust, and they will sing over you the cheer,”

15 making the land by his strength, establishing the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding he stretched out the heavens, 16 to the sound of his giving a roar of waters in the heavens, and making mists go up from the ends of the earth, lightning to the rain he made, and his spirit went forth from his treasuries.

17 All humanity brutalized itself away from knowledge; every smelter was ashamed on account of an idol, for deception was his drink offering and no spirit was in them.

18 They are vanity, a work of mockery; in the time of their visitation they will perish.

19 Not as these is the portion of Jacob, for a fashioner of the entirety is he, and the rod of his possession, Yahweh of armies is his name.”

| Yahweh | 20 A war club to me are you, a vessel of war, and by you I will shatter the nations, and by you I will destroy kingdoms. 21 And by you I will shatter horse and his rider, and by you I will shatter a chariot and his rider. 22 And by you I will shatter man and woman, and by you I will shatter old and young, and by you I will shatter young man and virgin. 23 And by you I will shatter a shepherd and his flock, and by you I will shatter a plowman and his yoke, and by you I will shatter a governor and rulers. 24 And I will recompense Babylon, and all dwellers of the Chaldeans, all their distress which they did in Zion before their eyes – Utterance of Yahweh! 25 Behold, I am before you, mountain which has been ruined, – Utterance of Yahweh! which has been ruined to all the Earth, and I stretched out my hand upon you, |

17 “From the exceptive sense of if … not (Lat. nisi, quin) is derived the sense of absolute necessity, necessarily, which is equivalent to assuredly; cf. after an oath: 2Kg 5.20; Jr 51.14 (§ 164c); apart from an oath: 1Kg 20.6; Mi 6.8.” Joüon and Muraoka, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.), 604. “For a positive statement, Hebrew uses כּי certainly, which is no doubt derived from כּי נִשְׁבַּע (§ b): 1Sm 26.16 בְנֵי כּי יהוה חַי אַתֶּם מָ֫וֶת by Y. the living God! (certainly) you deserve death; 2Sm 12.5; 1Kg 18.15. In 2Kg 5.20; Jr 51.14 we find כי; cf. § 164c.” Ibid., 583.

18 Note Fishbane's very helpful discussion on the connection of these sections to the beginning of the book of Jeremiah. Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 300–301.
and I rolled you away from the cliffs,  
and I gave you to the burning mountain.  
26 And they did not take from you a cornerstone or a  
foundation stone,  
for you became eternal devastations  
— Utterance of Yahweh!

Narrator 27 Lift up a standard in the land; sound a trumpet among the nations;  
consecrate nations upon her;  
cause the kingdoms of Ararat Minni and Ashkenaz to hear concerning  
her; visit a marshal upon her; bring up horse as a bristling locust.  
28 Sanctify upon her nations  
the kingdoms of the Medes, her governors and all her rulers, and every  
land of his dominion.  
29 And the earth will quake and will writhe,  
for she established upon Babylon the thoughts of Yahweh,  
to set the land of Babylon as a waste from having no one to dwell.  
30 The strongmen of Babylon ceased to wage war; the dwellers in the  
stronghold dried up; their strongmen were as women;  
I kindled her tabernacles; her bars were broken.  
31 One running will run to call one running,  
and one declaring to meet, one declaring to one reporting to the king of  
Babylon,  
for his cities were captured from the borders, 32 and the fords were  
seized and the marshes burned with fire,  
and the men of war were terrified.

Narrator 33 For thus said Yahweh of armies, God of Israel,  

Yahweh “The house of Babylon is as a threshing floor;  
the time of her treading-down continues a little;  
and the time of the harvest will come to her.”

Israel 34 “Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ate us,  
he sucked us dry;  
he placed us as empty vessels;  
he swallowed us down;  
as a dragon, he filled his belly from dainties;  
he rinsed us off.”

Narrator 35 “My violence! My flesh!” Said she who dwells in Zion,  
and, “My blood is to those dwelling among the Chaldeans,” said  
Jerusalem.  
36 Therefore, thus said Yahweh,

Yahweh “I will argue your argument, and I will avenge your vengeance,  
and I will lay waste her sea, and I will dry up her spring.  
37 And Babylon will become as a heap of stones, refuge of jackals, a  
waist and a hissing,  
from having no one to dwell.  
38 Together as young lions they will roar, they growled as
36 whelps of lions.
   39 In their warmth I placed their feasts and I made them drunk,
       in order that they will exult and they will sleep the sleep of eternity, and they will not awake –
   Utterance of Yahweh!

40 I brought them down as male lambs to the slaughter, as rams with he-goats.

41 How Shesheck was captured, and the praise of the whole earth was seized!

How Babylon became a waste among the nations!

42 The seas ascended upon Babylon; in the roar of its waves she was covered.

43 Her cities became a waste, land a drought, and the desert plain, land;
       no man was dwelling in her and no son of Adam crossed over her.

44 I will visit upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth from his mouth his thing swallowed, and the nations will not flow to him anymore;
       moreover, the walls of Babylon fell.

45 Go out from her midst, my people, and escape, each man with his life from the burning anger of Yahweh.

   46 And lest your heart grow weak and you fear because of the report which is reported in the land, and it will go in the year’s report, and afterward in the year’s report,¹⁹
         and violence is in the land, and tyrant upon tyrant.

47 Therefore, behold, days are coming when I will visit upon the idols of Babylon and all her land;
       she will be ashamed, and all her dead will fall in her midst.

48 And the heavens and the earth and all which is in them will give a ringing cry on account of Babylon, for those devastating will come from the North –
   Utterance of Yahweh!

49 Moreover, Babylon is to fall for the pierced-ones of Israel;
       moreover, to Babylon fell the pierced-ones of the whole earth.

50 Fugitives from the sword, go, do not stand; remember Yahweh from a distant land, and let Jerusalem arise upon your hearts.

Israel 51 “Let us be ashamed,
         for we have heard reproach;
         insult covered our faces, for strangers came upon the sacred places of the house of Yahweh.”

Yahweh 52 Therefore, behold, days are coming –
         Utterance of Yahweh!
       – When I will visit upon her idols and all her land; the pierced one will

¹⁹ I.e. year by year, annually.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nations</th>
<th>54 A sound of an outcry from Babylon, and a great breaking from the land of the Chaldeans. 55 For Yahweh is destroying Babylon and he is blotting out from her – a great outcry, and their waves are growling as great waters – it gave a roar of their voices. 56 For the destroyer is coming upon her, upon Babylon, and her strongmen will be captured; she shattered their bows, for to a recompense Yahweh will surely make a completion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>57 And I will make her chieftains and her wise men drunk, her governors and her prefects and her strongmen, and they will sleep the sleep of eternity, and they will not awake – Utterance of the king, Yahweh of armies is his name!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>58 Thus says Yahweh of armies, “The broad walls of Babylon will surely break, and her high gates in fire will kindle and nations will toil in a sufficiency of emptiness, and peoples in a sufficiency of fire will grow weary.” 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah, son of Neriah, son of Maaseiah, in his going with Zedekiah, king of Judah, to Babylon in the fourth year of his kingship,

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20 “Like אים (§ f), כִּי can be used for an unreal supposition: Jr 49.16 even if you soared like an eagle (like אים in the parallel Ob 4); 51.53.” Joüon and Muraoka, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (rev.), 593.

21 Bright argues persuasively here that this cannot be late material. Bright, Jeremiah, 1965, 21:360.

22 A brother of Baruch “… in the service of the prophetic tradition…” Brueggemann, The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah, 73. He “… helped link Jeremiah to what must have been an important political force in Jerusalem.” Ibid., 31. In addition, Babylon!


25 … I.e., in the year 594/3 BC This was the year of the plot to rebel against Babylon recorded in chapter 27.” Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 771. "The fourth year of Zedekiah (59) was also the fourth year of the 597 captivity, in which Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) and the leading citizens of Judah had been
and Seraiah was chief of the resting place.

60 And Jeremiah wrote all the evil which would come to Babylon, to one book all these words were written to Babylon.

61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah,
   “During your going to Babylon,
   then you will see
   and you will call out all these words.

62 And you will say,
   ‘Yahweh, you, you spoke to this place,
   to cut it off,
   in order to not be in it anyone dwelling, from man to beast,
   for it will become devastations of eternity.’

63 And it will come to pass as you complete calling out this book,
   you will bind upon it a stone
   and you will cast it to the midst of the Euphrates.

64 And you will say according to this,
   ‘Babylon,
   you will sink down
   and you will not rise26
   from the evil which I am bringing upon her,
   and they will weary themselves.’27

Thus far the words of Jeremiah.28

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deported.” Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah*, 156. In this way, then, the fourth years of three Kings, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and his Zedekiah, receive significance in the framing of the prophetic oracles.

26 Friebel convincingly argues that this is not a magical scene, but a communicative one with an appropriate sign-act. Friebel, *Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts*, 154–166. Thus, we see the need to have the final chapter ending with Jehoiachin!

27 Cf. what happened with Jehoiakim in ch. 36! Jehoiakim, probably unknowingly, was performing an execration ritual upon his own nation!

28 “The book of Jeremiah contains the legacy (Heb *dibrê* in 1:1 and 51:64 covers both “words” and “acts”) of Jeremiah the prophet. The earliest record contained is of Jeremiah’s boyhood call to be a prophet in the 13th year of King Josiah, i.e., 627 B.C. Jeremiah is last heard from in Egypt following the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e., sometime after 586 B.C.” Lundbom, “Jeremiah, Book Of,” 706–707.
Table 17: Jer. 52

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 A son of 21 years was Zedekiah in his kingship, and 11 years king in Jerusalem, and the name of his mother was Hamital,²⁹ daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 And he did the evil in the eyes of Yahweh according to all which Jehoiakim did.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 For on account of the anger of Yahweh, it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah until his casting them from before his presence and Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.³⁰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4³¹ And it came to pass in the ninth year of his kingship, in the 10th month, on the 10th of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his force, came upon Jerusalem and they encamped upon it, and they built upon it a bulwark surrounding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 And the city went into the siege until the 11th year of king Zedekiah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 In the fourth month, in the ninth of the month, then the famine grew strong in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 And the city was broken open and all the men of battle will flee and they went from the city at night a way, a gate between the walls, which was above the garden of the king.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


and the Chaldeans were upon the wall surrounding
and they went the way of the desert-plain.

8 And the force of the Chaldeans pursued after the king
and they overtook Zedekiah in the desert-plain of Jericho
and all his force was scattered from upon him.

9 And they seized the king and they brought him up to the king of
Babylon,
to Riblah, in the land of Hamath
and he spoke judgment with him.

10 And the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes,
and, moreover, all the chiefs of Judah he slaughtered in Riblah.

11 And the eyes of Zedekiah he blinded
and he imprisoned him in bronze fetters,
and the king of Babylon brought him to Babylon
and they gave him to the house of visitation until the day of his death.

12 And in the fifth month, in the 10th of the month –
that was the year, the 19th year, of king Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon –

32 Roncace notes the incongruity: “A second intertext that is even more palpable is found in 32:4 and 34:3. In a warning to Zedekiah in 32:4, Jeremiah prophesies that Zedekiah will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon and that “you will speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye.”26 Similarly in 34:3, Jeremiah informs Zedekiah “you will see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face.”27 These prophecies take on a cruel irony as Zedekiah does see Nebuchadrezzar, only to be blinded by him. This unmistakable allusion to 34:3 recalls the larger context in ch. 34, including 34:4–5 in which Jeremiah promises Zedekiah a peaceful death: “Thus says Yahweh concerning you: You will not die by the sword; you will die in peace. And as there was burning (of spices) for your fathers, the kings who were before you, so will they burn (spices) for you and lament for you.” Zedekiah witnesses the execution of his sons, is blinded, exiled in chains to a foreign land, and, as is reported later (52:10–11), dies there; the king does not experience a good death.28 This disparity between prophecy and narrated events is often handled by understanding an implicit conditional clause so that the king is promised a peaceful death only if he obeys the voice of Yahweh. [Cf., for example, Bright, Jeremiah, 216.] However, in light of the observations made above, this may be interpreted as another instance of incongruity between prophetic word and reality.” Roncace, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem, 123–124. There are also incongruities between the story about Jehoiachin at the end of this chapter and the oracle in 22:24-30. Perhaps this is an intended parallelism, to demonstrate that the prophetic word is still subject to Yahweh, the Lord of history, for its fulfillment. “In the Deuteronomistic tradition, one of the tests of a true prophet was whether the judgment of exile that God promised through Jeremiah would come true. Jeremiah’s editors attached the prose account of the Babylonian exile in 2 Kings 25 as a concluding appendix to Jeremiah in ch. 52. The historical appendix was a confirming sign to the reader that Jeremiah’s words of judgment had indeed happened in history as Jeremiah had predicted. This represents a kind of historical criticism. But even for the Deuteronomistic tradition and the criteria of true prophecy in Deuteronomy 18, history alone was no guarantee. Even if a prophet’s words come true, if that prophet speaks in the name of another god, then that prophet is a false prophet (Deut. 18:20). For Jeremiah, God in the end will have the final word about what is true and what is false.” Olson, “Between the Tower of Unity and the Babel of Pluralism: Biblical Theology and Leo Perdue’s the Collapse of History,” 358. Nevertheless, to what extent did the word of Yahweh come true? Does not the ending point this out?

33 This information is not included in chapter 39. Cf. Newman and Stine, A Handbook on Jeremiah, 1009.
Nebuzaradan, chief of the guard, came;
he stood before the king of Babylon in Jerusalem.
13 And he burned
the house of Yahweh
and the house of the king
and all the houses of Jerusalem
and every house of the great
he burned with fire.
14 And all the walls of Jerusalem surrounding, all the force of the
Chaldeans who were with the chief of the guard, broke down.
15 And the poor of the people
and the remnant of the people who were left over in the city
and those who had fallen when they fell to the king of Babylon
and the remainder of the artisan-[class],
Nebuzaradan, chief of the guard, exiled.
16 And the poor of the land
Nebuzaradan, chief of the guard, left as a remnant
to be vineyard-tenders and husbandmen.
17 And the pillars of bronze which belonged to the house of Yahweh,
and the bases and the bronze sea which were in the house of Yahweh,
the Chaldeans broke,
and they carried all their bronze into Babylon.
18 And the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the bowls and the
pans and all the bronze utensils which were serving among them, they
took.
19 And the basins and the censers and the bowls and the pots and the
lampstands and the pans and the sacrificial bowls
which were refined-gold
and which were refined-silver
the chief of the guard took.
20 The two pillars, the one sea, and the 12 bronze cattle which were
under the bases
which the king, Solomon, made for the house of Yahweh,
not weighing their bronze35 to all these vessels,
21 And the pillars, 18 cubits in height,
the one pillar and the one cord of 12 cubits surrounding it, and its
thickness was four fingers hollow.

34 “MT-Jer. plusses in parentheses: addition of titles:…52:16: (Nebuzaradan).” Raymond F.
Person, Jr., “A Rolling Corpus And Oral Tradition: A Not-So-Literate Solution To A Highly Literate

35 GKC believes this may involve the combination of two readings. Gesenius, Gesenius’ Hebrew
Grammar, 415. This is by no means certain.
22 And the capital upon it of bronze and the height of the one
capital was five cubits
and the lattice-work
and the two pomegranates upon the capital surrounding,
the entirety was bronze,
and as these to the second pillar also belonged to pomegranates.
23 And there were 96 pomegranates to the [four] winds;
all the pomegranates were 100 on the network surrounding.
24 And the chief of the guard took
Seraiah the high priest
and Zephaniah the second priest
and the three guarding the threshold.
25 And from the city he took
one eunuch, who was an overseer upon the men of battle,
and seven men seeing the face of the king who were found in the city,
and the chief scribe of the army waging war with the people of the
land,
and 60 men from the people of the land who had been found in the
midst of the city.
26 And Nebuzaradan, chief of the guard, took them, and he went with
them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.
27 And the king of Babylon struck them and he killed them in Riblah, in the
land of Hamath,
and he exiled Judah from upon its land.

36 GKC believes translators should omit this article, a perspective I have not adopted. In light of
the (probable) Babylonian functionary who appears in the oracle against Jehoiachin, this likely refers to a
specific person. “Ibid., 413.

37 Verses 27-30 do not appear in the LXX. Cf. Daniel Hays's discussion of the implication of this
for theories of inspiration. J. Daniel Hays, “Jeremiah, the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Inerrancy:
Just What Exactly Do We Mean by the ‘Original Autographs’?,” in Evangelicals & Scripture: Tradition,
Authority, and Hermeneutics, ed. Vincent Bacote, Laura C Miguélez, and Dennis L Okholm (Downers
Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 137.

38 Barton and Muddiman make the important point that this chapter substitutes a census of the
exiles for the description of Gedaliah's governorship and assassination. Barton and Muddiman, The Oxford
Bible Commentary on CD-ROM, bk. Jer 52:1. Census narratives are almost entirely absent from the
However, “...In 2 Ch. 2:17f it is said that “Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in the land of
Israel, after [i.e., like] the census of them which David his father had taken,” and put them to work on the
temple. The account of this raising of forced labor in 1 K. 5:13ff does not mention that these were aliens,
but cf. 1 K. 9:20–22. David’s levy referred to here is related in 1 Ch. 22:2, but not in Kings.” J. W.
DeHoog, “Census,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids,
MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979). Fales makes the important point that census lists
outside of Israel were for the purpose of determining exemption from taxation and military service, a clear
contrast to the census lists in the DtrH! Fales, “Census (Ancient Near East).”
28 This is the people whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled in the seventh year: 3023 Judahites;  
29 in the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, from Jerusalem, the life of 832;  
30 in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, chief of the guard, exiled the life of 745 Judahites;  
every life was 4600.39

31 And it came to pass in the 37th year of the exile of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the 12th month, on the 25th of the month,  
Evil-Maraduk, king of Babylon, lifted, in the year of his reign, the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah,40  
and he brought him from the house of confinement.  
32 And he spoke good with him,  
and he set his throne higher than the throne of the kings who were with him in Babylon.41  
33 And he changed the garments of confinement  
and he ate bread in his presence continually all the days of his life.  
34 And his meal allowance,  
a meal allowance was given to him continually from the king of Babylon,  
a daily word in his days,  
until the day of his death, all the days of his life.42

39 Thompson believes this represents the core of a restored Israel. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 783. To whatever extent historically true, it certainly fits nicely in the LXX, where the book of Baruch follows immediately. This group, plus Jehoiachin, probably forms the nucleus of Baruch 1, which follows immediately in the LXX. Yet, one must remember that whatever future is there appears deliberately vague. Cf. Hill, “The Construction of Time in Jeremiah 25 (MT),” 157–158.

40 Carroll here asks all the right questions. Carroll, Jeremiah, 1997, 100–101.

41 A king of kings? Or second in command like Daniel?

42 This creates a difficulty for the Torah-oriented tradition. Does the last king, Jehoiachin, have an heir or not? Cf. the discussion in Brueggemann, The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah, 129.


**Table 18: Acts 2:29-31**

| Ἀνδρεῖς ἀδελφοί, ἔδοξον εἰπεῖν μετὰ παραρτήσεις πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου Δαυὶδ ὅτι καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν καὶ ἐπέφη, καὶ τὸ μνήμα αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀχρὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. 29 | 29 Men, brothers! Being authorized to say with frank speech to you: Concerning the patriarch David, because he both met his end and was buried, and his grave is among us to this day, 30 therefore, being a prophet, and because he had seen (εἰδὼς) that God had sworn an oath to him to seat [someone] upon his throne from the fruit of his loins, 31 because of his foreseeing, (προϊδὼν) he talked concerning the resurrection of the Christ that neither was he deserted in Hades nor did his flesh see (εἶδον) corruption. |
| 30 προφήτης οὖν ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἰδὼς ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ καθίσαι ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ, 31 προϊδὼν ἔλαλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι οὐκ ἐγκατελείφθη εἰς ᾅδην οὔτε ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ εἶδεν διαφθοράν. | |

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44 Since ὅτι appears here in the middle of the discourse, it has its normal causal meaning, thus helping us to understand the function of the following aorist participles as causal as well.

45 NA27 supplies a period here, but a comma helps us see the three causal clauses and seems to require fewer additions in the English translation.

46 Alternatively “after-his-seeing”. Aorist masculine participle


48 Alternatively “after-his-foreseeing”. Aorist masculine participle
**Table 19: Acts 13:36–39**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36 Δαυὶδ μὲν γὰρ ἱδία γενεᾶ υπηρετήσας τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλῇ ἐκοιμήθη καὶ προσετέθη πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.</td>
<td>36 For on the one hand, David, in his own generation, after rendering service by the plan of God, was put to sleep and added to his fathers and saw decay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 ὃν δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν, οὐκ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.</td>
<td>37 But he whom God raised did not see decay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 γνωστὸν οὖν ἐστὼ ύμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὕμιν ἀφέσεις ἀμαρτίων καταγγέλλεται, [καὶ] ἀπὸ πάντων ὅν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι,</td>
<td>38 Therefore, let it be known to you, men, brothers, that on account of this man forgiveness of sins to you is being proclaimed, especially all of those from which you were not able to be justified in the law of Moses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται.</td>
<td>39 In this man, everyone who is believing is being justified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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49 “… it is doubtful whether there is a de to the men at … 13:36, the subsequent de being independent…” James Hope Moulton and Nigel Turner, *Style*, vol. 4, CD-ROM, A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), 59. Note that I disagree with Moulton and Turner here, because of the clear contrast Luke records Paul as making between David and Jesus.

### Table 20: Acts 15:15–19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθός γέγραπται·</td>
<td>And in this, the words of the prophets are fitting together just as it is written:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>μετά τὰ τὰτὰ ἀναστρέψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκοῦσαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτὴς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτὴν,</td>
<td>After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tent of David which has fallen and those things which have been torn down from it I will rebuild and I will set it straight again,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ὁπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐπ' ὧν ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν τὰ τὰ ἀνθρώπων τὸν θεόν,</td>
<td>in order that those remaining of humanity might seek out the Lord and all the nations upon whom my name has been called on them, says the Lord, who is doing all these things, known from [ancient] time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Therefore, I am determining not to annoy those from among the nations who are turning to God.

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51 Not “Thus says the Lord…” which is introduced by “…τάδε λέγει as an introductory formula [which] follows the normal Septuagintal rendering of ἀκούσα τοῦ τῶν Ἰσραήλ,” See, e.g., Septuagint Amos3:11; 5:16; Nah 1:12; Hag 1:5; Zech 1:16; Isa3:16; Ezek4:13.” Bechard, “The Disputed Case Against Paul,” 241, n 33.
