

This week's Audio, Video, and Teaching Notes are posted here.

Context Brings Clarity – Class Seven (Understanding Biblical Context; Micah and Isaiah; Key Events as Markers; The Earthquake in the Days of Uzziah King of Judah; The Nineteen Year Window of Josiah's Reign; The Ark of the Covenant is Missing; Chronology is Out of Order; Josiah's Reform – This Big Event; What's Happening in Topheth; False Reform Brings Disaster From the North; The Original Moses Scroll – Lost and Found; They Have Rejected My Torah; The Priests Have Done Violence to My Torah; God Put a Torah Before Them; Priests Who Discredit Jeremiah and Ignore His Words)

January 7, 2023 – Ross Nichols

Audio/Video Links:

<https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/context-brings-clarity-class-seven/>

& <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJTknSCeZYM>

Teaching Notes Link:

<https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023.1.7-Context-Brings-Clarity-Class-Seven.pdf>

TODAY'S INTRODUCTION

-Welcome to United Israel World Union, this is our Sabbath morning scripture study coming to you live from the United Israel Center South in Saint Francisville, Louisiana. Shabbat Shalom and thank you for joining us this morning.

-Jer 1:1 “The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.” This so begins the Hebrew bible's Book of Jeremiah and so begins our journey into a new and informative study on “The World and Words of Jeremiah the Prophet”. Unlike any other book among the Prophets there is nothing that is more of a seed bed for the immersing biblical faiths, post the biblical period as both Judaism and Christianity draw heavily upon the book and words attributed to the prophet Jeremiah.

-Throughout this study I'll show a connectedness between Deuteronomy and Jeremiah by carefully analyzing the contents of the Book of Jeremiah with two main focuses. We'll focus heavily on the text of Jeremiah in accordance with the context of the book. I also want to put you inside the text of the prophet Jeremiah in the ancient world in which he lived by imagining the scenery around us and seeing how the people, characters, and personalities come to life in front of your very eyes. We'll do everything we can to put you back to the 6th century BCE and work through the story as it unfolds.

-In this study we'll also draw on sources other than the Hebrew texts of the Masoretic bible such as found in the Septuagint, the Greek version and on the Dead Sea Scrolls drawing attention to the differences between them regarding the same material, The Book of Jeremiah. As I research and prepare for these classes, I'll also be looking at the original languages and consulting them to help make my intended point. We'll also learn quite a bit from archaeological discoveries as well.

-The order and arrangement of the material of these classes depends upon how I feel led to go with the class and that's developed as I prepare the material. Sometimes I'll follow a chronological order and at other times I'll prepare a class or classes on a more topical

overview and take a subject and do our horizontal study method. I intend to take a word, a verse, a paragraph, a chapter, or a section of text and build around it the ancient biblical context so that I can put you in the story. I'll be building a running commentary on the life and times of Jeremiah as we work through the book attributed to him.

-It's interesting that large sections of this book are presented as the actual words of Jeremiah. Based on things we've learned about authorship; we've recognized other hands in these texts, the hands of editors, redactors, or scribes. When it comes to Jeremiah, not only do we know a scribe that worked for Jeremiah by the name of Baruch ben Neriah.

We also get an indication as to parts of the book that he himself wrote and not Jeremiah.

-Much of the book introduces oracles of Jeremiah which seem to be written or could be written by Jeremiah's own hand. Many of these examples written by the hand of Jeremiah are written in the first person. This does not prove that Jeremiah wrote it just because a text is in the first person, but it gets us as close as we can at arriving at that possible conclusion. When we read where Jeremiah says, "and the word of the LORD was to me", we're going to believe this represents a form of Jeremiah's original oracle. Get ready to follow and trust the text to get us as close as we can to the historical, authentic message of Jeremiah of Anathoth, and help us to be "Honest to Jeremiah".

TEACHING NOTES

-In order to understand a text, we must have context. We need context in order to provide clarity for that which we're studying. Context will for the circumstances which form the setting for an event, and idea, or the meaning of prophetic words. Particularly in biblical studies, this is important. Without context, people might get some value out of what they read which feeds their soul, but how do we take the words of the biblical texts and understand them in such a way as to place ourselves in the audience of the original pronouncement.

-Understanding Biblical Context

-Before I get into the main part of my class, I want to demonstrate how important it is for us to understand the context of a given idea, prophecy, or section of the biblical text. In order to understand the bible, you have to read it in context. When we look at a particular text, we have to know the who, what, where, when, and why. We have to know who is speaking and who the audience is of the intended words. Is it speaking to an audience there or at another time or another place? What's the motivation behind a given text? Why do writers say certain things a certain way?

-Last week we talked about Isaiah 6 where he says he's in the throne room and he begins to describe this angelic vision that he receives at the time, in the year that King Uzziah dies. If we look at Isaiah 1, we know that he is a prophet in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, so we know that the vision comes early in his prophetic career.

-Micah and Isaiah

-Mic 1: 1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

-In context, we understand that Micah comes from Moresheth and that his prophetic career touches three kings of Judah. Notice that the message concerns Samaria and Jerusalem. Notice that his prophetic ministry overlaps Isaiah's. If we are trying to understand the time, the circumstances, and the context, then if I'm studying Isaiah, quite possibly I'll need to incorporate studies from Micah. I'll give you an example, in Isaiah 2

and Micah 4 have basically the same prophecy. If Isaiah and Micah get the prophecy, it probably doesn't take place in the days of Uzziah. Today I want to talk about context, what can we know? What do we know? What does the text tell us?

-Eze 1: 1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2 On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), 3 the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

-Key Events as Markers

-If you want to understand everything about this prophecy, you can't just study Ezekiel. We need to put it in context. It's the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. Jehoiachin is a son of Josiah, and he assumes the throne in 597 BCE. He's quickly dethroned and taken into exile. (2 Kings 24: 8-17) If I want to know about the exile, I need to get that background because all of this will give me context. I can tell you that the prophecy of Ezekiel 1 can be dated to 592 BCE. What's going on in 592 BCE? A lot of the details that we get from context will help us to better understand more of what we read if we can fill out the gaps. Sometimes key events help us when the writer includes things we ought to know. If you don't know something, it gives you a marker and gets you into the text. These are the kind of clues we are looking for.

-The Earthquake in the Days of Uzziah King of Judah

-Amo 1: 1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

-Amos is a shepherder in Tekoah and he has these visions come to him. Two kings are mentioned, Uzziah of Judah, here I can put Amos at least partially touching Isaiah's time. He sees the visions when Uzziah is king of Judah. It's 8th century BCE, some say 785 to 733 BCE give or take 10 to 20 years either way. While Uzziah is king of Judah, in Israel, in the north you have another king named Jeroboam the son of Joash. These two kings' reigns overlap. I have one more marker to put in, he says, two years before the earthquake. This was such a big deal that hundreds of years later people were still talking about this earthquake.

-Zec 14: 3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. 4 On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. 5 And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

-This gives us a historical event, whatever is going to happen, the feet of YHVH are going to be there and the mountain will split just like that earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. There is scientific evidence that this took place approximately in 760 BCE. Archeology confirms a massive earthquake occurred between 750 to 760 BCE. All of these things come together to help us form a better picture.

-Isa 24: 18 He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. 19 The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. 20 The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

-This is a prophetic vision and if I'm Isaiah looking for a way to describe the cataclysmic event, do I have anything in my day that I would bring to my memory that I would write about? Isaiah is a prophet in the time of Uzziah's reign. We think that Isaiah started about 740 BCE, if the earthquake took place in 760 BCE, 20-years earlier, evidently this was such a major earthquake in the days of Isaiah, do you think he could have referred to it? When Isaiah talks about an earthquake, I can tell you about one earthquake that's on his mind. It's the earthquake that took place during the days of Uzziah. Israel is sitting on a fault line. As Isaiah is predicting cataclysm he's drawing upon the events of his time.

-If you study Kings and Chronicles during the days of Uzziah, guess what's not mentioned? This earthquake. You would think that they would tell you about this earthquake. Sometimes the purpose of a given writer is not to bring in every single thing. If you're going to study Isaiah, you need to read Kings and Chronicles and Micah and all of the prophets that can bring to the table various elements that will paint the picture for you.

-The Nineteen Year Window of Josiah's Reign

-Today, we're talking about the days of Josiah from the thirteenth year of his reign until the thirty-first year of his reign when he dies. We're looking at a nineteen-year window of time. Of Josiah's thirty-one years, we only want to focus on nineteen because Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah from the priests at Anathoth, from the line which was cut off because Solomon was angry that Abiathar sided with the wrong candidate. This is when Jeremiah's prophetic career begins in the thirteenth-year of Josiah's reign. We are looking for nineteen years. Jeremiah has 52 chapters but not all of those chapters deal with those nineteen years that we're looking for. Within the 52 chapters of Jeremiah, they are not arranged chronologically, so context is important to help us put things on the map. What do you do if you have sections of Jeremiah that don't say that? Is there anything in the text, I don't have a date, but if I read this section of Jeremiah can I say this goes here or this goes there. Yes, sometimes context will give us a way to put these passages in the right place.

-Jer 3: 6 The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: "Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? 7 And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me,' but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. 9 Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. 10 Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD."

-All we know is that this word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah. Somewhere in that nineteen-year window when the two overlap. How far does this word that came him in the days of Josiah go? We know that Jeremiah 1 is the beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic career and that is the thirteenth-year of Josiah's reign. Are we to

assume that Jeremiah 1 up through Jeremiah 3 are all the days of Josiah? Some of this isn't in order, so try to deduce everything you can from context.

-The Ark of the Covenant is Missing

-Jer 3: 11 And the LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. 12 Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, "Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. 13 Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. 14 Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. 16 And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again.

-I think the people of that day, during the days of Josiah when this prophecy is uttered, do you know what they're saying? They are saying that the ark of the covenant of the LORD is in their mind, they do remember it, they do miss it, and they do want another one. Time is coming when this will not be the case, but the text is telling me that it is the case now. It's telling me that in the days of Josiah, the ark is missing, but I thought it was supposed to be in the temple. That's another class, I just want you to get it. How far does this go?

-Chronology is Out of Order

-Up through Jeremiah 6 this seems to go together, but when we get to Jeremiah 7 there's something that I need to tell you. Chapter 7 is no longer in the days of Josiah. Chapter 7 equals Jeremiah 26. If you take these two chapters and compare them, they are the same event. This is Jeremiah's great temple sermon. God thought it was great, but the priests and religious authorities didn't like it. Jeremiah 7 is at the beginning of Jehoiachin's reign.

-What about before Jeremiah 3:6? How much of Jeremiah 1:1 – Jeremiah 3:5 in the days of Josiah? You have to learn context in order to put that in the right order. Remember that Jeremiah doesn't write anything until twenty-three years into his prophetic ministry. We know the time in the fourth year of Jehoiachin's reign when God told Jeremiah to write down everything that I've said to you from the time I first spoke to you until now. Now was in the fourth year of Jehoiachin, in the twenty-third year of Jeremiah's prophesying. The idea is that he's writing two decades later but he writes it down. We know that the Book of Jeremiah as we have it is not chronological.

-Josiah's Reform – This Big Event

-Is there anything in the days of Josiah, some type of major thing, like a really big religious reform? The writers of Kings and Chronicles said that this was so great that there had never been anything like it.

-2Kin 23: 24 Moreover, Josiah put away the mediums and the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 Before him there was no

king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.

-Josiah was the most righteous king. He had a big revival. They had an incredible Passover in the time of Josiah. Nothing had happened like it since the days of Samuel or the days of the Judges. In Josiah's reform they rid the land of all the idols and bashed and burned things in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. This was all prompted by the discovery of the original scroll of Moses.

-2Chr 34: 1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.

-This is five years before Jeremiah becomes a prophet. We know Zephaniah is a prophet during the days of Josiah as well. This is big. Five years before Jeremiah hears the word of the LORD, Josiah is seeking God just like his father David, he doesn't turn to the right or to the left. One year before Jeremiah hears the word of the LORD there's this major purge and they are bashing idols.

-2Chr 34: 31 And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32 Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33 And Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

-This is in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, 622 BCE, and he's not going to die until his thirty-first year. This suggests that from 622 BCE until Necho kills Josiah on a battlefield, that during that window, remember that Jeremiah has been a prophet for five years when the scroll is found. He starts in the thirteen-year when he hears the word of the LORD. The scroll is found in the eighteenth year, so that's five to six years he's a prophet when the scroll is found. When the scroll is found, they don't go talk to Jeremiah or Zephaniah, they go talk to Huldah the prophetess. She says yes, bad things are coming but don't worry, you'll go to your grave in peace. He goes to his grave with an arrow. Chronicles tells us that everything is beautiful, but that's not what Jeremiah sees.

-I've got questions. I read Kings and Chronicles, I read Jeremiah and Zephaniah, I'm saying that this big event, Josiah's reform, that's got to be in Jeremiah? If I don't look, I'm not going to find it. If you take out the references to Josiah's reform from Kings and Chronicles, there's not much left. If you read Kings and Chronicles you get this idea that the religious establishment is corrupt as hell at this time.

-What's Happening in Topheth

-2Kin 23: 10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech.

-The writer of Kings is telling us about something that was going on in the days of Hezekiah. Have no fear, Hezekiah put a stop to it. They were causing their sons and

daughters to pass through the fire for Molech. They were killing their children right there in Jerusalem in the Hinnom Valley. There is where we get the idea of hell, it begins in Jeremiah, in his time. Jeremiah mentions this as well. Jeremiah 7 is equal Jeremiah 26 after the days of Josiah. This is about a temple sermon that takes place after Josiah during the time of Jehoiachin.

-Jer 7: 29 "'Cut off your hair and cast it away; raise a lamentation on the bare heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.' 30 "For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. 31 And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind. 32 Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it will no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth, because there is no room elsewhere. 33 And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and none will frighten them away. 34 And I will silence in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, for the land shall become a waste.

-Jer 8: 1 "At that time, declares the LORD, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs. 2 And they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshiped. And they shall not be gathered or buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. 3 Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, declares the LORD of hosts.

-Does this happen during the days of Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign, after 622 BCE when he has his big reform? He says that he takes care of this thing going on in Topheth. One could say that what's going on here should be placed between 622 BCE and the death of Josiah on the battlefield at Megiddo by an arrow from Necho. The peaceful death that Huldah promised him. Somehow maybe it's there?

-Jer 19: 1 Thus says the LORD, "Go, buy a potter's earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, 2 and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. 3 You shall say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. 4 Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, 5 and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind-- 6 therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7 And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead

bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. 8 And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. 9 And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.' 10 "Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth because there will be no place else to bury. 12 Thus will I do to this place, declares the LORD, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. 13 The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah--all the houses on whose roofs offerings have been offered to all the host of heaven, and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods--shall be defiled like the place of Topheth.'" 14 Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house and said to all the people: 15 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I am bringing upon this city and upon all its towns all the disaster that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words."

-False Reform Brings Disaster From the North

-In Jeremiah 7 and Jeremiah 19 God is extremely angry about what's happening in Topheth. They are sacrificing their children to Molech. He says it's going to stop but that place is going to be used to bury them, there won't be room anywhere else. If it was stopped by in the eighteenth year of his reign, in 622 BCE, the prophecies in Jeremiah 7 and Jeremiah 19 have to be situated before the discovery of the scroll and the revival and the great Passover and 2 Kings 23:10 or the official record says the king stopped it in word or after Josiah dies, they resume it again. Understand this Topheth is a big problem in the days of Josiah and Jeremiah talks about it in Jeremiah 7 and Jeremiah 19. In Jeremiah 7 with the temple sermon, the bulk of it happens after the days of Josiah. I think with good reason and texturally supported that these prophecies happen after the days of Josiah and therefore Josiah did not effectively eradicate what was happening in Topheth in his day.

-Kings suggests that even though Hezekiah was a good Godly man and did everything in his power to bring about a revival and a reform that the people didn't respond and ultimately destruction came anyway. Jeremiah is a prophet during the time of Josiah's reign, and he never says, it's really going good now. Jeremiah says this place is going down and God's going to wipe this place out. Zephaniah is reporting at the same time and doesn't get distracted by all the reports coming out from the government saying that everything is going well. Jeremiah's first two words in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, God asks him what he sees, and he says an almond branch. God says that's right because I'm going to hasten my word to perform it. I see a cooking pot tilted from the north. That's right because I'm going to bring disaster from the north. It's bad and the remedy is not happening.

-The Original Moses Scroll – Lost and Found

-What about the discovery of the Torah in the days of Josiah? It's a big deal. Does Jeremiah mention this? 2 Kings 22:23 and 2 Chronicles 34:35 that in the days of Josiah a cleansing of the temple is going on, a restoration is taking place of things that have fallen down. The temple had gone into disrepair with these other wicked kings and now they

have a good king and things are going in the right direction. They find a scroll, Hilkiah the priest from Anathoth, he finds in the temple the Torah, the one that Moses wrote, the original one. At about 900 years old it would have looked fresher than when we found the Dead Sea Scrolls which were 2,200 years old. It was in pretty good shape, the one that Moses wrote. The one that Moses wrote was lost prior to this. It was lost and found again. Lost and found. Is there anything in Jeremiah or Zephaniah that would say the Torah that was lost is found? That would be a big deal.

-References to the Word Torah in the Book of Jeremiah

-If we could show it. I look for key words so let's start with the word Torah in Jeremiah and Zephaniah. These are the references to Torah in the Book of Jeremiah. We know that in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign that Jeremiah had been a prophet for five years when the Moses scroll is discovered. You'd think that he might bring that up. See Jeremiah 2: 4-29 in its entirety.

-Jer 2: 8 The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.

-The priests are not saying, where is the LORD. I'm talking about the priests that are supposed to be looking for the LORD. The priesthood is not concerned with God. The ones who handle, grasp, or cease the Torah did not know me.

-They Have Rejected My Torah

-Jer 6: 16 Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' 17 I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.' 18 Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. 19 Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. 20 What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me. 21 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will lay before this people stumbling blocks against which they shall stumble; fathers and sons together, neighbor and friend shall perish.'"

-What you're doing now has changed, I want you to look at the ancient path where the good way is and walk in it. They said, we will not walk in it. They have not given attention to the word and have rejected my Torah. They are following something but it's not his Torah. My Torah they have rejected. Then it goes into a denouncement of sacrifices. Your sacrifices will not be accepted, they are not pleasing. Could he mean that they rejected the Torah that was found in his day? Something is found in Jeremiah's day, it's God's Torah, the original Torah, the one that Moses wrote. It's found and he says that they rejected it. The one that was found, could it possibly have not contained sacrifices? Maybe. Some people want that system back.

-Amo 5: 25 "Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?"

-Could it be that a scroll was found in the days of Josiah, in the time of Jeremiah that didn't have sacrifices and he's trying to call them back to that way and they say they're not listening, we like the way we've got it now. In the days of Jeremiah and in the days of Josiah, the real Torah scroll was found.

-Jer 8: 4 "You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD: When men fall, do they not rise again? If one turns away, does he not return? 5 Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding? They hold fast to deceit; they refuse to return. 6 I have paid attention and listened, but they have not spoken rightly; no man relents of his evil, saying, 'What have I done?' Everyone turns to his own course, like a horse plunging headlong into battle. 7 Even the stork in the heavens knows her times, and the turtledove, swallow, and crane keep the time of their coming, but my people know not the rules of the LORD. 8 "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. 9 The wise men shall be put to shame; they shall be dismayed and taken; behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD, so what wisdom is in them?

-The Priests Have Done Violence to My Torah

-Understand that they are holding on to something which is deceptive and refuse to look at and accept the Torah. What they are looking at is something different. This very clearly says that the lying pen of the scribes is at work here. Those who have taken hold of the handles, have taken hold of the Torah, what do they do? They don't even know God. They've rejected the word of YHVH. Could the scribes have changed the Torah? Jeremiah is saying that. Our traditions say that things have been good all along. Did Jeremiah trust the priesthood? He's a priest. He says the priesthood is hopelessly corrupt. He want's them to repent, but they won't. Did the prophets think that the priesthood was functioning right? Why does Malachi 2:3 bring a word of YHVH about dung from the sacrifices being smeared on the priests faces? Maybe Zephaniah has something about people keeping the Torah the right way?

-Zep 3: 4 Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy; they do violence to the law.

-The ones who are supposed to be taking care of the holy things and distinguishing between the profane and the common and the common and the holy, they've not done what they're supposed to do. They've polluted the holy and done violence to the Torah.

-Eze 22: 26 Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

-The priests have profaned the holy and done violence to the Torah. Something about the Torah that they did God calls violent. Let's say that they had a Torah that they had already corrupted and then a new Torah is found in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. When you compare the two, you realized they've changed things. Or when they found the Torah, the one that Moses wrote, then after did they do things to it or both?

-Jer 9: 13 And the LORD says: "Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, 14 but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. 15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.

-God Put a Torah Before Them

-In Jeremiah's day a scroll was found and what did Jeremiah say? The Torah was literally put before them, and they said they wouldn't have anything to do with it. Was it literally set before them in the days of Josiah? The phrase "put before you" is very Deuteronomic.

-Deu 4: 8 And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

-Deu 11: 26 "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:

-Deu 11: 32 you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today.

-Deu 30: 1 "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you,

-Deu 30: 15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.

-Deu 30: 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

-I put before you, my Torah. I put before you, life, and death. That's a phrase that's only in Deuteronomy. Everybody reads the account of the discovery of the scroll and without exception most scholars say that the scroll that was discovered in the 1800s was a form of Deuteronomy. This idea of putting the Torah before the people isn't found in any of the material in Deuteronomy 12 – Deuteronomy 26. That's priestly material. Whenever it says the God put a Torah in front of them, I think it means literally because it was found in their days. People today are also defending something that they've been told to defend, it was the same in the days of Jeremiah.

-Jer 16: 9 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will silence in this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. 10 "And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' 11 then you shall say to them: 'Because your fathers have forsaken me, declares the LORD, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshiped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law, 12 and because you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, every one of you follows his stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me. 13 Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.'

-This idea that they have done the same thing as the fathers. He puts the torah in front of them and they continue to refuse. What does the priesthood say?

-**Priests Who Discredit Jeremiah and Ignore His Words**

-Jer 18: 18 Then they said, "Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to any of his words."

-The priesthood says, listen up, let's discredit him. We are going to strike him with our tongues. They lash out and speak bad against Jeremiah. Then we are going to ignore his words. They are upset because he is making a clear statement that the religious establishment that they've established, this is a lie and it's not the original. You priests have done violence to the Torah. God said, I've put my Torah before you and you've rejected it. Jeremiah even said that the priests are the ones that have messed up the Torah.

They are the ones who have caused it to parish and come to ruin. You've spoiled it. What is their response? They are going to discredit Jeremiah and ignore his words.

-Jer 26: 1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: 2 "Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. 3 It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds. 4 You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, 5 and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, 6 then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.'"

-This is right after the days of Josiah. I'm sorry people get a little bit shaken by the true message of scripture. You've been thinking that everything is perfect in Judah and the kings and during the days of Josiah. Josiah has just been put in the grave here and this is the beginning of his son's reign. God tells Jeremiah to go stand in the gate of the house and don't leave anything out. It won't be well received. When a person is called by God to give the truth it's not always accepted very well, particularly among the religious folks.

-The sermon Jeremiah gives in Jeremiah 26 and in Jeremiah 7 is not in the days of Josiah. I'm going to show you that it happens after the discovery of the scroll. Jeremiah 23, they didn't obey your voice or walk in your Torah.

-Jer 44: 7 And now thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, infant and child, from the midst of Judah, leaving you no remnant? 8 Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, making offerings to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to live, so that you may be cut off and become a curse and a taunt among all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers, the evil of the kings of Judah, the evil of their wives, your own evil, and the evil of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not humbled themselves even to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in my law and my statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

-He talks about how he set before them and their fathers the Torah and yet they didn't follow it.

-Jer 31: 31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

-It says I'm going to put my Torah in their midst and write it in their heart. In the context of Jeremiah, realize that in his day the Torah was literally put in their midst, and they rejected it. They were shown the real Torah. It didn't agree with what they had. Jeremiah tried to appeal to them and said that the lying pen of the scribes is at work here. He even tells them what the lying pen wrote in there. Context is important if we want to understand.

-The Torah that Moses wrote was lost and then found in the days of Josiah, in the days of Jeremiah, and in the days of Zephaniah. It was put before the people and the ancient ways were shown to them, a good way that the people rejected even though it could give comfort to them. The priests lost the Torah. The priests did violence to it. The people rejected it choosing their own way. Specifically, what did Jeremiah do when that scroll was found? Join me next Saturday and I'll let him tell you.

Shabbat Shalom

THIS WEEK IN TORAH

JANUARY 7, 2023

This week's Torah Portion VaYechi: "And He Lived" (Genesis 47:28 – 50:26) Jacob's end draws near; His request of Joseph; Jacob's illness; The blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim; Jacob's blessings: Reuven, Simeon, Levi, Judah, (A tiny glimpse at the messianic era), Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, Benjamin; Jacob's final request; Our father Jacob did not die; Jacob is mourned by all Egypt; Permission for burial; The burial procession; Joseph reassures his brothers; Joseph lives out his years; Signs of the redemption. "Shavua Tov" and Have a Great Week!

"This Week in Torah" FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/571648826269105/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

-Blossoming Rose Israel Tours (2023): <https://blossomingrose.org/>

-Walking the Ancient Paths – March 17 - 28, 2023, See the Sights, Go Behind the Scenes; Dr. James D. Tabor. <https://blossomingrose.org/2023-walking-the-ancient-paths/>
-80th Annual UIWU Conference, Charlotte, NC: April 21-23, 2023, <https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/conference/>

-Tanakh Tours – Egypt / Jordan, October 31 – November 12, 2023,

<https://www.tanakhtours.com/biblical-egypt-jordan-tour/> &

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwVIZvqHq-I>

-Tanakh Tours – Israel, November 12 – November 19, 2023,

<https://www.tanakhtours.com/tanakh-tour-november-2021/>

-James Tabor YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/jamestaborvideos>

-James Tabor Blog: <https://jamestabor.com/>

-James Tabor Videos Channel Trailer: Posted November 4, 2022.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9GVG2m18JQ

-Ross K. Nichols YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9-ZXSjHKN6L0N4EbjhJ2fA>

-UIWU YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq31WAlio9zC1eXDzrEVzlg/featured>