

The Last Five Kings of Judah (640 to 587 B.C.)

Home Study 1A Jeremiah & the Last Five Kings of Judah (A) (Jeremiah 1:1-3)

Welcome to the first of your **Home Studies!** These are more advanced than in our other SEAN courses so please don't get behind with your work or you may find it difficult to catch up due to the extremely steep cumulative learning curve. However, on completing the course we think you will agree that it has been well worth the effort! Now please read the instructions on the page to your left and follow them carefully throughout.

1. As we have already seen, the Book of Jeremiah starts with a most brilliant little summary of the history of Judah covering the whole time of Jeremiah's ministry. This provides us with an excellent foundation for our study of his book.

So now read again this historical introduction in **Jeremiah 1:1-3**.

Once you have re-read these verses, tick this box as a pledge that you have done so.

2. Among other things, these verses immediately give us a number of significant points about Jeremiah and his family.

- a) Who was Jeremiah's father?
- b) What was his calling?
- c) In which village did the family live?
- d) In which territory was this situated?

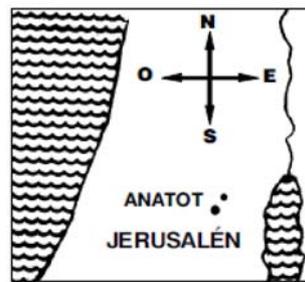
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- a) Hilkiyah.
 - b) He was a priest.
 - c) In the village of Anathoth.
 - d) In the territory of Benjamin.

3. This mini-introduction also gives us valuable information about Jeremiah's call and the history of the times in which he ministered.
- Review the names of the three principal kings during whose reigns Jeremiah ministered, by listing them in the order in which they ruled.
 - Over which territory did these kings reign?
 - Turn to Map 1, of Judah & Israel in Jeremiah's day, on page B-62 (remember, Study Book B). What number does Judah have?
 - Of these three kings, which was the father and which were his two sons?
 - In the reign of which of these kings was Jeremiah called to minister and in which year of his reign?
 - In the reign of which of these kings did Jeremiah's ministry in Judah come to an end?
 - With what tragic event did Jeremiah's ministry in Judah and Zedekiah's reign both come to an end?

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- Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.
 - They were all kings of Judah.
 - 13.
 - Josiah was the father, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah were two of his sons.
 - Jeremiah started to minister in the 13th year of Josiah.
 - His ministry ended when Zedekiah lost his throne in the 11th year of his reign.
 - With the exile of the people of Jerusalem (to Babylon).

4. So Jeremiah was brought up in Anathoth, a little village about 3 miles from the capital, Jerusalem. In which direction does it lie from the capital?

To the north east of Jerusalem.



5. a) Without looking back, see if you can remember the names of the three main kings of Judah during whose reigns Jeremiah was prophesying.
b) How many miles did we say that Anathoth was from Jerusalem?

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- Josiah, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah. (1:2-3)
 - 3 miles.

6. Now turn to **the last three chapters of 2 Chronicles** where we are given a lot more information about these kings. Find the exact references there, which cover the reign of each of them. To do this you only need to glance through the titles given in your NIV Bible. Then jot down the correct references below.

- a) Josiah 2 Chronicles _____
 b) Jehoiakim 2 Chronicles _____
 c) Zedekiah 2 Chronicles _____

- a) 2 Chronicles, chapters 34 & 35.
 b) 2 Chronicles, 36:5-8.
 c) 2 Chronicles 36:11-20.

7. You may have noticed that 2 Chronicles mentions two kings that were **not** in our list in Jeremiah 1:2-3. In other words an extra king is mentioned between Josiah and Jehoiakim and another between Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. So complete your research by jotting down the names and references of these two extra kings below.

- a) _____ 2 Chronicles _____
 b) _____ 2 Chronicles _____

- a) Jehoahaz 2 Chronicles 36:1-4.
 b) Jehoiachin 2 Chronicles 36:9-10.

8. **Practical Work 1:**

Now turn in your Bible to the first page of Jeremiah and write on the top of the page: "Background Information — 2 Chronicles, chapters 34 to 36" to remind you where you can find this historical background information on his ministry. As the last four chapters of 2 Kings cover exactly the same period in Judah's history, also write there "2 Kings, chapters 22 to 25"

9. **Practical Work 2:**

This Course has 12 valuable review charts which you will find on pages B-46 to B-61 (i.e. in Book B). Find the second of these, Chart 2 on page B-47, and fill in the first column of Section "A" with the names of the last five kings of Judah during whose reigns Jeremiah ministered, in exactly the **same order** in which they appear in 2 Chronicles 34 to 36. **Keep this Chart 2 open.**

 These are: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.

10. We will now continue to search in 2 Chronicles for further information about the reigns of these five kings. For example, it is important to know which of them did right in the eyes of the Lord and which did evil. In those days, when kings had great influence on the religious life of their people, this would have greatly effected Jeremiah's ministry. You can find this information about their characters by just glancing through the opening verses on each king (if you can't find the information you want in 2 Chronicles, turn to the parallel passage in 2 Kings).

- a) Name the only king who did what was right in God's eyes.
- b) Name the four who did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

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- a) Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:1-2).
 - b) Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31-32); Jehoiakim (2 Chron.36:5);
Jehoiachin (2 Chron.36:9); Zedekiah (2 Chron.36:11-12).

11. Practical Work 3:

Now write either "Did right" or "Did evil" in the space provided for each king in the column entitled "Character" in Chart 2.

12. In the same way find out how long (in round years or months) each of these kings reigned by searching in the chapter in 2 Chronicles given for each.

- a) Josiah? (chapter 34)
- b) Jehoahaz? (chapter 36)
- c) Jehoiakim? (chapter 36)
- d) Jehoiachin? (chapter 36)
- e) Zedekiah? (chapter 36)

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- a) Josiah— 31 years. (34:1)
 - b) Jehoahaz — 3 months. (36:2)
 - c) Jehoiakim — 11 years. (36:5)
 - d) Jehoiachin — 3 months. (36:9)
 - e) Zedekiah — 11 years. (36:11)

13. Ignoring the brief months that Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin reigned, what were the total number of **years** that the kings of Judah were on the throne?

31 + 11 + 11 = 53 years in all.

14. **Practical Work 4:**

- a) Write the durations for each of these reigns in the spaces provided in the column entitled "Length of reign" in Chart 2.
b) Then add the total number of years for them all (i.e. 53 years) in the bottom square of this column.

15. With this information as to the length of each king's reign, why do you think Jeremiah excluded two of the five from his list in 1:2-3?

As Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin both only reigned for such a short time (3 months each) they were of much less importance than the others, who each ruled many years.

16. From the length of time each king reigned, you will now be able to calculate how long Jeremiah's ministry in Judah lasted. For example, what does Jeremiah 1:2-3 say as to:

- a) the exact year of Josiah's reign in which Jeremiah **began** his ministry?
b) the exact year of Zedekiah's reign in which he **finished** ministering in Judah?

- a) The 13th year of Josiah.
b) The 11th (and final) year of Zedekiah.

Although Jeremiah's ministry **in Judah** came to an end with Zedekiah being taken into exile, he still continued to minister for an unknown period, but **in Egypt**.

17. We have just worked out the total period that these last five kings were reigning in Judah; we are now going to work out the total number of years that **Jeremiah was ministering** during their reigns. If necessary, do these simple calculations on a separate sheet of paper (even on your “shield”).
- First we must work out how long Jeremiah was ministering during **Josiah’s** reign. We have just seen that, in all, Josiah ruled for 31 years; but remember Jeremiah only started his ministry in the 13th year of his reign. So for how many years was he ministering while Josiah was on the throne?
 - And how long was he ministering during the reigns of the two other main kings, **Jehoiakim and Zedekiah**, according to what we have already seen?
 - We can exclude the reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin from our calculations because they only reigned 3 months each. So adding the figures together for the three **main** kings, we can arrive at the **total** number of years that Jeremiah was ministering during the period of all these kings. How many?

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- $31 - 13 = 18$ years.
 - $11 + 11 = 22$ years.
 - $18 + 22$ gives a total of 40 years in all.

18. **Practical Work 5:**

Enter the number of years Jeremiah ministered during each reign, in the three **available** squares in Chart 2 in the column entitled “Years of Jeremiah’s Ministry”. Finally write the total in the bottom square.

19. The Summary for this Study 1A is a joint one with Study 1B. You will be told when and how to do it at the end of that Study.
20. In this next Home Study 1B you will finish filling in Chart 2. There will be quite a lot of work involved as you figure out the actual dates B.C. for the reign of each of the five kings, so I suggest you get on with this next Study as soon as possible.