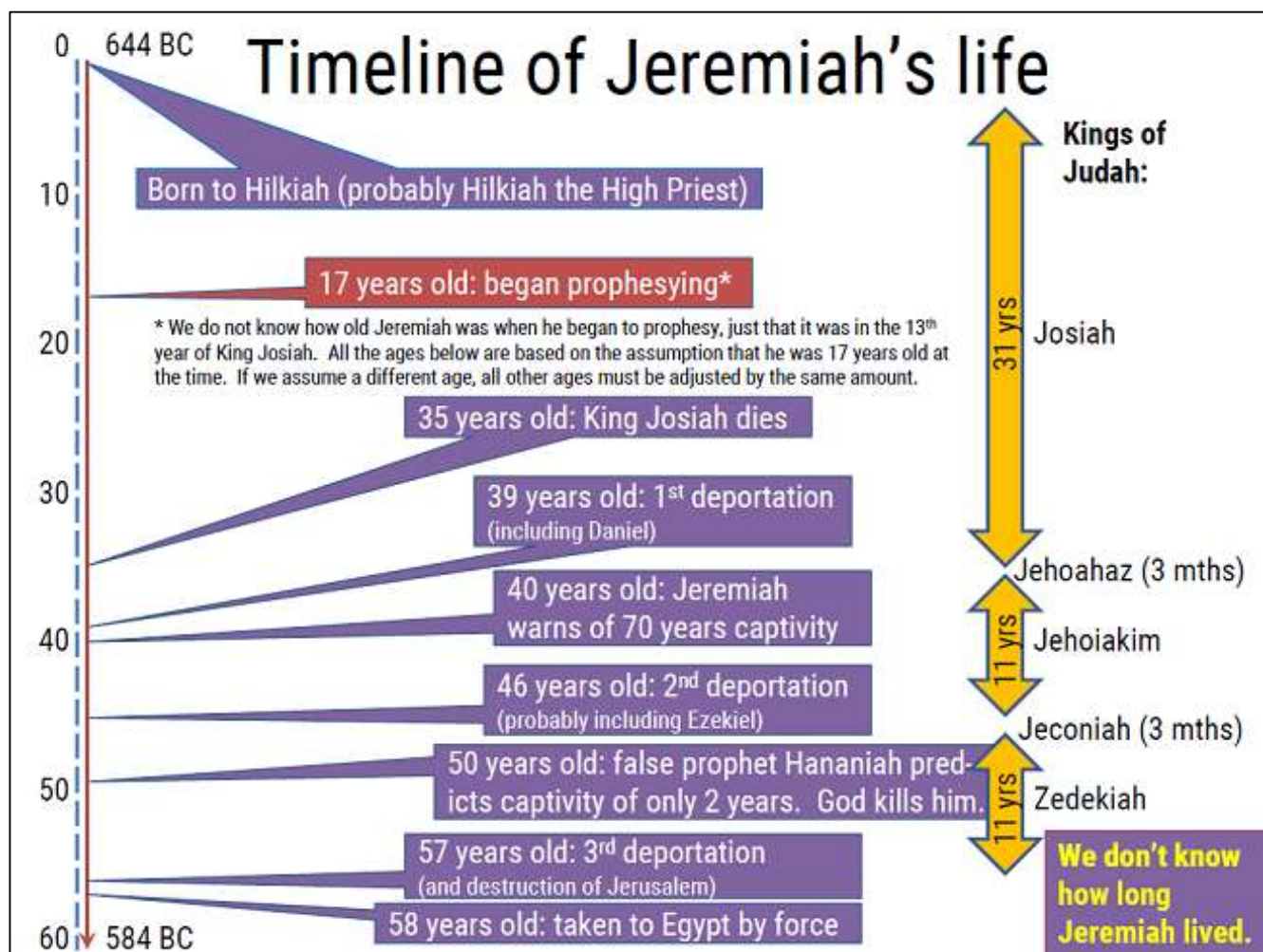


Study 6 – Jeremiah

Before we begin: Read Jeremiah 20:7-18. Discuss what you think life must have been like for Jeremiah as he preached destruction in his time. What struggle do you see going on for Jeremiah in this passage? In what ways do you feel you can relate to his struggle?

Historical background

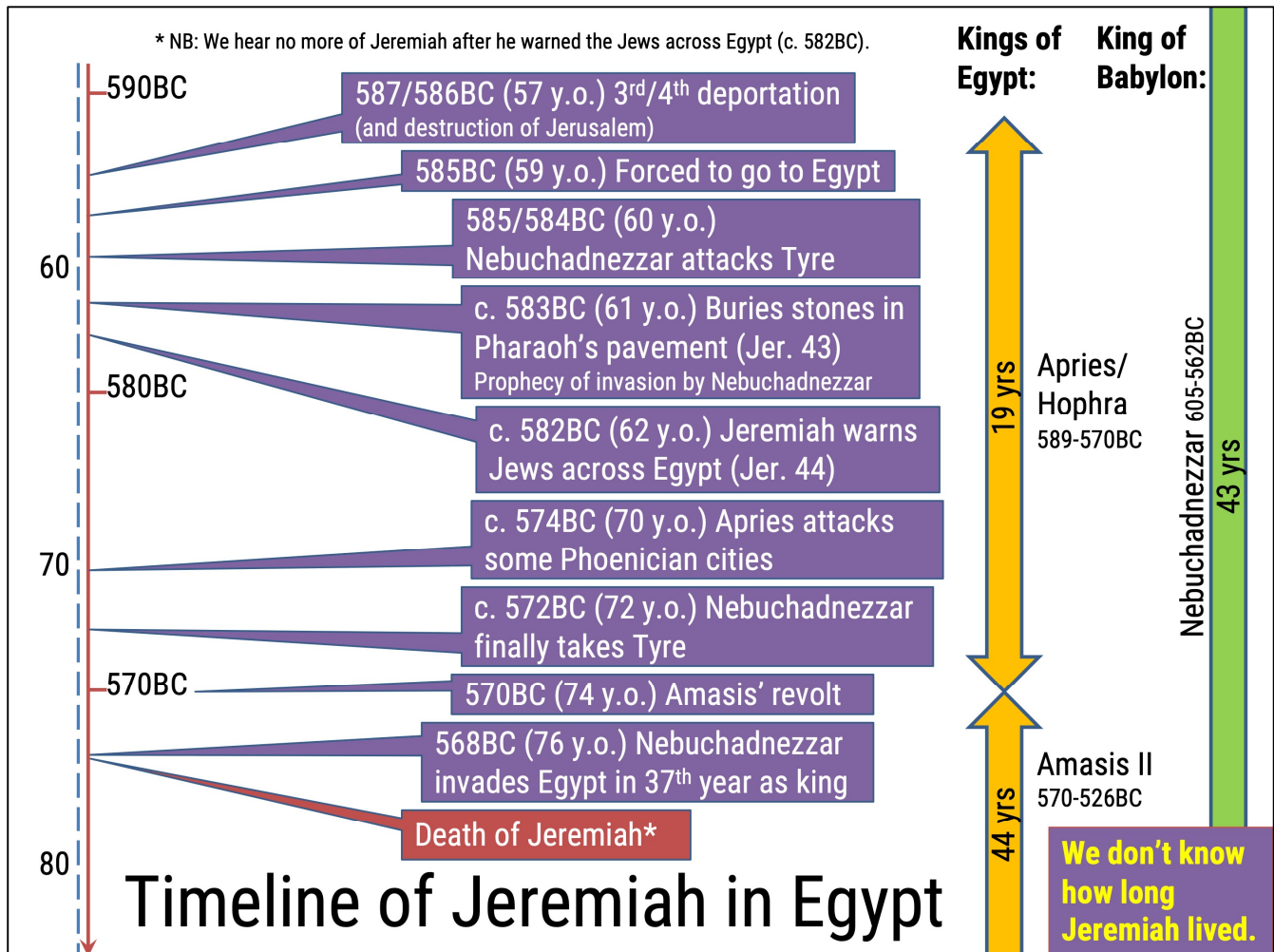
Jeremiah's history covered a span of 40 years — from his call in the 13th year of King Josiah (626 BC) until the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. In those 4 decades he prophesied under the last five kings of Judah — Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. While he was preaching, important personalities and events were shaping history beyond his native Judah. It was one of the most fateful periods in the history of the ancient Near East and it affected Judah's history too.¹



¹Wood, D. R. W., D. R. W. Wood, and I. Howard Marshall. *New Bible Dictionary*. Includes Index. electronic ed. of 3rd ed. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962.

Study 6 – Jeremiah

Watch the [Bible Project video for Jeremiah](#).



Structure of Jeremiah

- See the bible project outline.

Themes in Jeremiah

The judgement of God

- Jeremiah often seen as the prophet of Judgement
 - God is watching and preparing his judgement from Babylon
 - **Jeremiah 1:11-14** ¹¹ ¶ The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" "I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied. ¹² The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled." ¹³ ¶ The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?" "I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered. ¹⁴ The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land."
 - But Jeremiah was not gloating or enjoying his message

Study 6 – Jeremiah

- **Jeremiah 4:19** ¹⁹ Oh, my anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain. Oh, the agony of my heart! My heart pounds within me, I cannot keep silent. For I have heard the sound of the trumpet; I have heard the battle cry.

The covenant

- Jeremiah encouraged the people to live out their covenant faith
 - As imaged through circumcision
 - **Jeremiah 4:3-4** This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. ⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done-- burn with no one to quench it.
 - But the people have become obstinate in their rebellion as their forefathers were and therefore Judgement will come on them.
 - **Jeremiah 7:27-29** "When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer. ²⁸ Therefore say to them, 'This is the nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips. ²⁹ Cut off your hair and throw it away; take up a lament on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath.
 - **Jeremiah 22:8-9** "People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' ⁹ And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'"
- However, most famous within the covenant theme are the passages of the middle section of the book - chapters 30-33.
 - God will renew his covenant and his people from the inside out
 - **Jeremiah 31:31-33** "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

The temple, formalism, and idolatry

- Josiah may have reformed the worship of the temple but it appears that it did not stick
 - Jeremiah rails against the misuse of the temple through hypocrisy
 - **Jeremiah 7:8-11** But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. ⁹ "Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, 'We are safe'-- safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹ Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

Study 6 – Jeremiah

- **Jeremiah 26:2-3** ² "This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. ³ Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done.
 - Idolatry is a key concern for Jeremiah. Its futility and stupidity are repeatedly highlighted.
 - **Jeremiah 10:1-5** Hear what the LORD says to you, O house of Israel. ² This is what the LORD says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them. ³ For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. ⁴ They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter. ⁵ Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good."

The end of Jerusalem and its institutions

- Isaiah declared to Hezekiah concerning the King of Assyria...
 - **Isaiah 37:33-34** "Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria: "He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. ³⁴ By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city," declares the LORD.
- But this is no longer the case in Jeremiah's time
 - **Jeremiah 25:8-9** Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, ⁹ I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the LORD, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.

Jeremiah's Eschatology

- Jeremiah focuses mainly on the immediate and local destruction of Jerusalem and the temple
 - However he also speaks in more long term and universal terms just like the other latter prophets
 - **Jeremiah 4:23-26** ²³ I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone. ²⁴ I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. ²⁵ I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. ²⁶ I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger.
 - Jeremiah maintains a hope for the kingly line of David with a true shepherd to come
 - **Jeremiah 23:5-6** "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.
 - See also the narrative of the last passage of the book = 52:31-34

Study 6 – Jeremiah

- Jeremiah also speaks of the hope of a remnant of Israel
 - **Jeremiah 23:3** ³ "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.
- See also Jeremiah 31:31-34 (above) regarding the hope of covenant renewal.

Exercise:

Read again Jeremiah 31:31-34.

- Who is making the covenant?
- Who will the covenant be with?
- How will it be different to the covenant made at Mt Sinai?
- What are the key features of the new covenant?
- How is this passage fulfilled?

Discuss: What can you learn from Jeremiah when it comes to your own faithful ministry before God?

Homework:

Optional – Read the [NBD article on Jeremiah](#). (see the online “handouts” folder)

Read the OT3 notes for study 6

For next time: Read the book of Ezekiel