

Jeremiah is up there with Isaiah as a major preaching prophet. We'll get just a taste of him, enough to encounter a rather new idea he introduces to Hebrew prophecy. Harris reviews him on pp. 233-238.

Writing assignment: Yet another new system! (a) Bring written responses to items marked with an asterisk (*), but think about all of them. (b) These responses must be typed. Individual responses only.

Harris, p. 196-197 (chart) and p. 217, "Jeremiah" paragraph.

This is all the history you'll be expected to know: That Jeremiah comes about a hundred years after Isaiah. The issue is no longer the Assyrian Empire; it is now the Babylonian Empire growing under Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah thus leads up to (and then goes beyond) that key year of 587 BCE, when Babylonia invades Judah and the great Babylonian Exile begins.

Harris gives a general review of Jeremiah on pp. 233-238. He tells us there that Jeremiah is a sprawling collection of different oracles from different times.

Jeremiah 1.1 to 5.17; 13.1-17; 19.1-14; 27.1 to 28.17; 31.27-34: less than ten chapters.

1.1-19. Some interesting additions to the picture of a prophet's job. Is it only to "destroy and overthrow"? Can he expect difficulties? Jeremiah, by the way, hated the job – for good reason: he endured death sentences (11.18-21), was put in stocks (20.1-4), and was instructed by YHWH to go around wearing a yoke such as oxen wear (13.1-7)!

***2.1-13:** This passage ends with a strong bit of imagery for apostasy. What would you guess about the physical environment of a place that would produce this image?

***2.14 to 3.10:** (a) Some whores work in brothels, where they are sought out by customers. What kind of whore has Israel been? (b) What is the meaning of 2.27 (which describes what *priests and prophets* are doing!)? (*These questions by no means do justice to the wealth of powerful imagery in this section! Pause over it, please!*)

3.11-14: (a) At 3.12, "Return, faithless Israel" try using the footnotes to re-create what the Hebrew play on words might sound like. Just put the two words together in an order of your choosing and say them. Oh, what we're missing! But then, people who speak only Hebrew and no English miss out on such wonderful English wordplay as "Krispy Kreme" and "What the going gets tough, the tough get going." Poor things. (b) the more important question: What could be the significance of YHWH's going from referring to "faithless Israel" as a wife to calling upon his "faithless children"?

***4.4:** Remembering that male circumcision is the central ritual act for Israelites, put this line into your own words.

4.5-13: This will sound familiar. Note the eschatological formula – “On that day. . . .”

***4.14-22:** At 4.14 and at 4.22, what two different explanations are suggested for why the Israelites sin?

4.23- 517: It goes on being heartbreaking. (a) At 5.6-9, what is being condemned – apostasy or adultery? (b) Can the prophets be trusted to help?

13.1-7: Another example of the kind of symbolic acts that seem to be part of some prophets’ jobs. You might want to take account of it if you’re doing a Help Wanted ad for prophets! (*See announcement at end of this handout.*)

19.1-14: Be shocked.

***27.1 to 28.17:** Another symbolic act for poor Jeremiah! What exactly is Jeremiah being ordered to tell all the nations (including Judah) that Nebuchadnezzar is invading? Is this what the other prophets will be telling them? What kind of prophets are these other prophets?

***31.27-34:** Create a question designed to help someone gain insight into the significance of this passage for understanding Jeremiah.

Extra Credit: Help Wanted ads for prophets may be turned in up to Fri. Feb. 18 at midnight (hard copy or email). Ads may earn up to 10 pts.; the 10 points will be for ads that manage to be concise and clever while – above all – demonstrating a good sense of what one learn about the job of a Hebrew prophet from the readings we have done. Group submissions are allowed this time.

