

LIFE OF JEREMIAH—HANDOUT #26

Jeremiah 37-38

Macrostructure (34-38)

- 34—reign of Zedekiah
- 35—reign of Jehoiakim
- 36—reign of Jehoiakim
- 37/38—reign of Zedekiah

Narrative comparison (34-38)

Location: Chapter 37

Chapter 38

Closes (21) _____

Closes (28) _____

Opens (1, 4) _____

Opens (1) _____

Benjamin Gate (13) _____

Benjamin Gate (7) _____

Cistern (15, 16) _____

Cistern (6) _____

Character:

Antagonist (14) _____

Protagonist (7) _____

Plot sequence:

Siege (5) _____

Siege (vv. 2-3) _____

At Gate (13) _____

At Gate (vv. 7-8) _____

Linked interface:

Chapter 35

Chapter 36

King:

Position of Jeremiah:

Round character:

Fate of Jeremiah:

Motif:

Chapter 34

Chapter 37

Crisis: (vv. 21-22) _____

(vv. 5, 7-8, 11) _____

Paradigm: bondage-release-bondage

 siege-freedom-siege

Chapter 34

Chapter 38

Story: slaves

Leitwörter: (Hebrew, *ebed*)

Oppression: slaves

Jeremiah

Reversal (relent/renege): free slaves/re-enslave free Jeremiah/re-imprison Jeremiah

Vocabulary:

Sword, famine, pestilence (34:17)

38:2

Official(s) (Hebrew, *sarîm*) + “all people” (34:10, 19)

38:4

Lament (34:5)

cf. 38:22

Prediction: Judah released to bondage (34:17)

Judah captured (38:3)

Suggested Outline:

Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem in January 587 B.C.

Egypt, under Pharaoh Hophra, advances towards Judah (?Fall 587 B.C.)

Nebuchadnezzar lifts the siege of Jerusalem to meet Egypt

False prophets predict Babylon will not return (37:19)

Slaves released by Zedekiah in celebration of lifting of siege

Jeremiah goes to Gate to go to Benjamin—can move out of the city

Jeremiah arrested by Irijah for treason

Jeremiah put in pit Jonathan’s house

Egypt retreats from the advancing Babylonian army

Nebuchadnezzar returns to re-impose siege of Jerusalem

Jeremiah released by Zedekiah to court of the guard

Slaves re-enslaved as necessary slave labor during renewed siege

Jeremiah unmasks false prophets who predicted, “No return of Nebuchadnezzar.”

Jeremiah preaches surrender—either openly or from the court of the guard

Jeremiah re-arrested for treason

Jeremiah put in pit in Malchijah’s house

Ebed-Melech frees Jeremiah with Zedekiah’s permission

Judean deserters go over to Babylonians; they know the game is over

Jeremiah released to court of the guard

Jerusalem breached and destroyed June-August 586 B.C.

37:3—Jehucal = _____ (38:1)

Zephaniah (21:1-10; 29:24-32; 52:24)

Why “pray”?

v. 5—Pharaoh Hophra (589-570 B.C.), successor to Psammeticus II, mentioned 44:30; cf. Ezek. 17:11-21, esp. v. 15 (Egypt as a useless ally, Jer. 2:18-19, 36; Lam. 4:17)

- v. 13—Benjamin Gate. Where?
- v. 15—“beat him” (lit., “beat him to kill him”) NB: “angry” = “enraged”
Where else?
- v. 16—“cistern”
- v. 18—cf. John 18:23
- v. 19—who was one such false prophet?
NB: 17:15; 23:21, 26-32

38:1—Pashhur, ben Malchijah, cf. 21:1
v. 6—“cistern”

v. 7—“in the gate” Who? Why?

- v. 10—“30 men”
- v. 14—“third entrance”
- v. 16—irony?
- v. 22—explain