

## **Allan MacRae: Jeremiah: Lecture 1**

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### **Introduction:**

#### **Jeremiah is an excellent foundation for the study of the prophets [00:00- 1:25 ]**

It's in a way an accident that I'm giving Jeremiah this year. I have not given a course in Jeremiah for a good many years. But someone came to me last summer and said, "I think I have a pretty good grasp of other prophetic books. I have taken three electives on parts of Isaiah, one on Ezekiel, one on Daniel. I think I have a pretty good grasp on those books but I don't know much about Jeremiah." It was in response to that recent suggestion that I decided to teach this course. The more I looked into it again, the more I feel that it is a very good place to start, not so much for the material, but for the method and ways of understanding. Jeremiah is perhaps a little more difficult to get into for certain reasons than some of the other books. But once you get into it, it is one of the easiest. Once you get past the initial difficulties, the principles become clearer than most of the other prophetic books. Thus it makes an excellent foundation and background for the study of the prophets.

#### **Jeremiah's uniqueness: [1:26-2:32]**

##### **Longest especially if Lamentations is included**

##### **More facts about Jeremiah's personal life than any other prophetic book**

##### **(although Elijah, Elisha and Moses have more in that regard)**

Now, Jeremiah is rather unique. It is the longest of the prophetic books, especially if you take Jeremiah and Lamentations together. The six chapters of Lamentations were

written by Jeremiah, and in a way they could be considered part of his book. Even without it, it is slightly longer than the book of Isaiah, and thus the longest of the prophetic books. It contains more facts about Jeremiah's life than are known to us about any other of the writing prophets. The only prophets about whose life we know more than we do about Jeremiah are Elijah and Elisha. And if you want to consider Moses as a prophet, which he certainly was--though the other activities in his life were so important so we don't usually don't consider him a prophet--we do know a lot more about Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. But I cannot think of any other individual who is regarded specifically as a prophet of whose life we know so much about--the external factors of his life or his inner thoughts and attitudes--than we do of Jeremiah. So the book is rather unique in that regard.

### **Jeremiah's Uniqueness: [2:33-4:34]**

#### **Many predictions fulfilled in his own lifetime: prediction / fulfillment motif**

##### **Other prophets: Old Testament prediction and New Testament fulfillment**

The book of Jeremiah has more predictions in it about events that would take place very soon after the prediction was given than any other of the prophetic books. I believe I should qualify the statement I made a few moments ago that Jeremiah was the best place to start studying the prophetic books. I would stand by that, but I would qualify it this way. If one wishes to study predictive prophecy, Jeremiah is the second place to go. The first place is the accounts of Elijah, Elisha, and the prophets in the historical books, where you find a prophet making a prediction and then you see how the prediction is fulfilled. There are many people who take the statements of the Old Testament prophets as they are

recorded in the New Testament without any background understanding of the activities of these prophets when they gave their predictions which were exactly fulfilled in the New Testament. In this that way you can get an idea of the relationship between a prophecy and its fulfillment. If you just take prophecies and say now we're going to interpret them, you can very easily make guesses or suggestions that have no basis. Comparing Old Testament predictions and their New Testament fulfillment gives a solid basis for the study of predictions. As for Jeremiah, he has more predictions of events that are fulfilled within the writer's own lifetime than any of the other writing prophets. Therefore, it is excellent as background for understanding prophecies and their fulfillment in the Old or New Testaments.

Jeremiah has some very specific difficulties in beginning its study. You might say it's like a pond with a little sludge on top, but if you just move that sludge and there's crystal clear water underneath. However, after you move away that sludge, the initial difficulty, Jeremiah becomes much clearer than most of the other prophetic books are. There are some interesting problems in the book of Jeremiah. Some very interesting cases where vital and interesting questions are raised that we will look at as we go on.

### **Chapter 31 the most difficult chapter in the book [4:35-5:01]**

There are a few very difficult statements and these are mostly in Chapter 31. Chapter 31 is the one very difficult chapter in the book, and I don't think one should undertake the study of Chapter 31 before having studied other chapters rather extensively. Even then there are problems in that chapter that nobody knows the answer

to, though I think you will have an interesting time dealing with that chapter, though it will not come for some time.

### **Jeremiah's Uniqueness: [5:02-5:41]**

#### **Historical Background is well known:**

##### **Many great international events and focus on one major historical event**

We have more knowledge of the historical background of Jeremiah than we have of most other prophetic books. Many of them deal with one specific event, one specific situation. In this case, Jeremiah was dealing with a period in which great international events occurred. It is in the course of these events that Jeremiah gave his prophecies. Many of them are related to one or other of these events, and so we have to have an idea of this historical background. In the interest of time, we can note certain major events in the beginning and look for details as we go on. But the book is not arranged chronologically like some of the other prophetic books.

#### **Unusual arrangement of Jeremiah [5:42-6:27]**

##### **Jeremiah is not arranged chronologically (contra Ezekiel and Daniel)**

You take the book of Ezekiel and it gives you a date when each prophecy was made in straight chronological order. You take the book of Isaiah and you have different sections that deal with particular situations or particular times. Each section makes an interesting unit to study by itself, or to study in connection with one other section, without reference to its history. The book of Daniel goes right through his life. But in Jeremiah you have considerable oscillation; you don't strictly follow subjects; you don't strictly follow chronology. And the way it came to be that way is rather interesting and unusual, and I

think you will notice that in connection with one of your assignments. Simply to say, it is at first a bit confusing because of the rather unusual arrangement of material in the book.

### **Much in the book about Jeremiah's inner life of the prophet [6:28-7:18]**

Now someone has said that the name "Jeremiah" means "the Lord casts". That's not absolutely certain because there is more than one possibility in interpretation of names as there is so often with names, but it is a very possible suggestion. This writer went on to say that the picture is as if God casts out something great into the world that went flying on through like great fireworks that shoot into the air in all directions and flame out and make out a beautiful and impressive situation that affects greatly the situation of the time. I think that can be said more about Jeremiah than about any other of the prophetic writers. So his life is a very interesting life. We have much in the book showing his inner experience and also his relations to other people and various events.

### **Jeremiah begins with the call of Jeremiah (compare Ezekiel; Isaiah 6) [7:19-8:11]**

The book of Jeremiah begins with the call of the prophet. Ezekiel begins with the call of the prophet. Isaiah has what may be the call of the prophet in the sixth chapter. Since it's not in the beginning, some think it may not be the call of Isaiah, but an important vision after he had been a prophet for a time. I sometimes refer to it as an inaugural vision and that leaves it up to the listener to decide whether it was the inauguration of being a prophet or the inauguration of some important feature of his work. But in Jeremiah, it starts right at the beginning.

God knew there was a very difficult situation to hit, a situation of deterioration in many regards. A situation that no human being could have foreseen. He wanted to

prepare Jeremiah to take an important part in this situation in representing God as events developed.

### **Historical Background: 3 Kings [8:12-9:04]**

**Josiah 640 – 609 BC**

**Jehoiakim 609-597 BC**

**Zedekiah 597-586 or 587 BC—**

And so I'll say just a word right here about the situation. There are three kings whose names are vital in connection with the book. In case you don't know them, let's name them at this point. First there's King Josiah who reigned from 640 BC to 609 BC. And then we skip over the next king who only reigned 3 months for the moment; we'll come to him another time. Jehoiakim reigned eleven years from 609 to 597. And the third one who was particularly important in the book is King Zedekiah. He reigned 11 years from 597-586 BC.

### **When does a year begin?**

#### **Month names (October...):--Roman year begins in spring [8:57- 11:58]**

Now I said 586. You will find some books that say 587. I think a word on that is important here When does the year begin? Well, it ought to begin on the day of the year the world was created. But who knows on what day the world was created? The Romans began the year in the springtime, in what we call March, which was their first month. And so their seventh month they called September, which means seven. Their eighth month they called October, which means eight. And their ninth they called November and their tenth they called December, calling them not the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and

twelfth month but the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth month. Nobody today in America would think of December as the tenth month. We always think of it as the twelfth month, yet we call it by the name that means the tenth month. We use the Latin names so we don't realize what we're doing.

The Romans named most months that way until Julius Caesar changed one, July to bear his name instead of the number. His successor Augustus stole one day away from February so his month wouldn't be shorter than Julius' month and changed the next month to August, after himself. Many of these names got changed from the original terminology. It shows there are various ideas as to when to start the year.

Then of course, Christians began to celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25, celebrating the birth on that day, as nobody knows the actual date of Christ's birth, but it became a very early custom to celebrate it then. Surely when our Lord was born should be the beginning of the year. But we already had a year system that began 6 days later. So most of us begin our year a week after the time when we celebrate the birth of Christ. During the Middle Ages, very logically, the court at Rome, the Pope began their year on December 25. So when you find a date between December 25 and January 1 in papal documents, you may figure that it'll be a year later than the history books give because they began it a week earlier than you began it.

Well, in ancient times there were various customs. And the result is that when we say this was 587 or 586 we don't know just where they began the year at that particular time. It may have been different in different times. These ancient dates will differ by one year. Nobody will say that the end of Zedekiah's reign was 585 or 588. It's between 586

and 587. Most people are pretty well settled on 587. I think Zedekiah reigned until 586. Now you have in mind the order of these three kings who reigned for a sizable term of years: Josiah for 31 years, Jehoiakim for 11 and Zedekiah for 11 years.

### **Jeremiah 1:1 and the setting of the book [11:58-13:03]**

#### **Anathoth (just north of Jerusalem)**

#### **Josiah to Zedekiah**

Now, we read at the beginning of the book of Jeremiah a chronological statement. So we want to look at the first verse of the book, “The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests of Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.” Incidentally, this Anathoth is a little town just a few miles north of Jerusalem. “The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah and through the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah.”

And that is quite important because that gives us a general idea of the situation at that time in the kingdom of Judah. The Northern kingdom had been taken into captivity a hundred years earlier and was called “Israel,” the name that had applied to all. It gives us an important idea of the time when he began his ministry. And it continues in the next verse, “down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.”

### **Peace/War with major powers (East/West Germany and Soviets) [13:04-16:22]**

Now, the situation in the thirteenth year may be very similar to the situation in the world today. I think that is another reason why the book of Jeremiah can be of very great interest to us. We cannot tell what may be in the future. Things may not develop the same



way today as they did then, but there is very great reason to think that things might. In the early part of the reign of Josiah the world seemed quite placid and calm. There was a great King of Assyria at the capital in Nineveh who had been reigning for many years. His great wars had come to an end. Things were quite peaceful throughout most of the world. People were expecting a long period of stability. The people were falling more and more into sin and into general forgetfulness of God. Ahead were great crises that one would not see much sign of as yet if one did not look carefully at what was occurring internationally.

If you look at world conditions today – they showed on the television this morning in the news how the American secretary of state was in Berlin to try to get the Germans to increase their preparation for war because they are not spending near as much for the protection of themselves as the American government feels they ought to spend if they are to be prepared in the case of a Soviet invasion. The German people, most of them are inclined to agree with us, but there is an increasing number who do not want to accept that idea at all. They know if the Soviets attack, they will be the first to be attacked and they do not want to see their houses destroyed and cities ravaged and their lives plundered. And so the question is, “If we prepare for war sufficiently to hold them back, we are safe, but who knows how much that would cost when their resources are tremendous compared to the rest of Europe? Isn’t it just better to be careful not to offend them and just trust them not to attack?” And so there is a minority in Berlin, but a substantial minority who began rioting and burning cars and making a big disturbance saying, “We’re for peace.” If you have peace and things continue as they are, that’s one

thing. But if having peace means the Russians can come in and put as many of them as they wish into concentration camps and reduce the rest to slavery, some feel that would be better than being killed and some would feel that would be worse than death. And so people differ. They say it is a minority but an outspoken one.

At present, if anyone in West Germany wants to go to East Germany where maybe most of his relatives are, the East German government now immediately makes him surrender to them his passport and all his documents about his life in West Germany. Then they take those and train someone, a thorough Communist in East Germany, to take over his identity and live with his papers somewhere in West Germany while he is strictly confined to one section of the town in East Germany so that he can in no way get information to anyone in West Germany that this other person is pretending to be he. They say that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people in West Germany who are strong communists using false names and preparing for the time of taking over. Well, who knows? Things may go on peacefully for another hundred years. But there is every reason to think that they may not. And that is similar to the situation in Jeremiah's day, except that in his day you could not get information as readily as we can about what is occurring, and it was not so easy to know that was ahead.

### **Assyrians (Nineveh) carry off Josiah's grandfather but no problem now**

**[16:23-17:02]**

People in Judah in the early part of Josiah's reign tended to say, " Yes, Josiah's grandfather was carried off to Nineveh as a captive and held there for a time but then allowed to come back and forced to confess his subservience to the Assyrian over-

lordship. But they haven't bothered us for 30 years. Things are going along nicely now. Everything is smooth and comfortable now. They say God brought our people out of Egypt and did wonderful things for us in the past, but things are good now. We have some religious people in the country but they were just sort of walking along and gradually deteriorating in their loyalty to Scripture and their interest in the things of God."

**Jeremiah prepared by God for his task in a time of crisis: His call (Jer 1:4ff)**

**[17:03-17:56]**

In this situation in the thirteenth year of Josiah, God called a man to serve Him in the difficult situations that God knew lay ahead. So He selected him carefully and prepared him for the task ahead, and He gave him an intimation of the difficulties that lay ahead. I'm sure the difficulties were far beyond what Jeremiah imagined they would be, but he could see what they might be. In fact, God warned him that they would be severe. And God set to prepare him for the situations that lay ahead. And so I read with you from the NIV, the first, second, and third verses of Jeremiah. "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'" Here is this young man Jeremiah and God says this to him. And Jeremiah just doesn't quite know how to take it.

**Prophetic objection/resistance to call (Jer 1:6-8) [17:57-18:50]**

And so we find his immediate reaction is the reaction most anyone would give seeing himself called to a task that he is not at all sure he could perform properly. And in this case the task actually was to be far more difficult than Jeremiah could have ever

dreamed at that time. Jeremiah says, as verse six tells us, “Ah, Sovereign LORD, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” How could this young man go out and become God’s spokesman? He is not greatly trained as yet at least; he is quite young; he does not feel he has particular ability. He says, I do not know how to do this, but the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child’. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD (Jeremiah 1:7-8).

**Be not afraid for I am with you (Jer 1:8) [18:51-20:19]**

If we are to speak God’s message we all need this word. "Do not be afraid of them"— how apt are we to hold back from speaking out to them boldly! People are on their way to eternal destruction, and we hold back from speaking to them and pointing out the situation ahead. Suppose we offend a dozen people and they dislike us for it. But suppose one to whom we speak is saved eternally - is it not worth offending a dozen to have saved one through all eternity? All of us, I think, need this word that God said to him. “Do not be afraid of them for I am with you.”

And of course in Jeremiah’s case, he was to face very great difficulties in the days ahead. He was to have to speak God’s word in such times and situations that he would seem to his own people, whom he loved so dearly, to be a traitor. He would seem to them as one who was being utterly disloyal, and it was a situation that is just hard for us to imagine what Jeremiah had to go through. But God says, “Do not be afraid, I am with you and will rescue you.” We do not know when Jeremiah wrote this down. He maybe wrote it down right then, maybe later on. In any case, as he read it later on in his life or as

he recalled it and wrote it down, he must have thought, “Wow, I had no idea then what was ahead, but now God has been with me in spite of the tremendous difficulties that I have had to meet.” And so he says the Lord knew how great the difficulties were and so the next few verses are very interesting.

**“Then The LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9) --**

**figurative/literal distinction [20:20-22:25]**

“Then The LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9). Now is that literal? Did the Lord really reach out a literal hand and touch Jeremiah’s mouth? I’ve heard some people say they take the Bible literally, every word literally. I wonder if they have ever read the Bible. You can’t take every word in any book that ever was written literally. However, you must take every word in the Bible to mean what God meant it to mean, you must interpret in context. The bulk must be taken literally or it’s reduced to nothingness. You have to have the bulk literally in any book or it just wavers in the air. I know of two men who have written extensively on the book of Revelation, written on the thesis that it is entirely figurative; everything in it is a figure; nothing is to be taken literally. Now, the book is full of figures, there’s no question of that, but when you take everything in it as figurative, it’s interesting to take these books by these two men and see how completely different their interpretations are at point after point. If you interpret everything in a book figuratively, anybody can make it mean anything that he wants to. And of course, that is not what God did – He didn’t put any nonsense in the Bible. So the bulk of the Bible must be taken literally, but there are figures.

Now, the hand of God touched Jeremiah's mouth - did he have a vision in which he saw a hand, in which he was given to understand the hand of God was touching his mouth? Did something happen that he felt could be described in this way better than any other? We don't know. But we do know this: God did something at that time, something which represented His power, shown by His hand, and something which affected Jeremiah's ability to speak God's message, as represented by His touch to his mouth. We must be careful to interpret here, in the light of context, in such a way to see what it is intended to mean. As to the precise details--how much is literal, how much is figurative--we very often do not know.

**Bible is not a map but words in human language: [22:26-26:49]**

**Interpretation and Inerrancy**

I think there is a point about inerrancy that is very important for us to have in mind. Biblical inerrancy does not mean that the Bible is like a great map, which is in such detail that it shows every little detail or aspect. Imagine you are in an airplane above a city. You can see a conglomeration down there of buildings and you can see fields around them and rivers wide. You see comparatively big features, but you don't see details – you're too far away. Now imagine you have a camera that takes pictures that show much more than you can see from that height and that you can magnify that picture. If you have a very wonderful camera, you can take a picture and you can magnify the picture to the place where you can pick out every individual house – even the names of the streets. That idea is what I think some people have of the Bible--that it is a complete

full picture of everything; that you just have to look more and more minutely in order to get every little detail.

The Bible is not that way. The Bible is not a map, but a series of words. And practically every word in practically every language has a variety of possibilities of meanings. If you see a little shack somewhere, you say that's the house these people live in. If you see a big palace, that's a house those people live in. You say the houses of Parliament where nobody lives, but we still call it a house. You see, the word "house" can represent many different sorts of buildings and it can even be used for the conglomeration of people – the Upper House or the Lower House of Parliament. Our words can be used in a narrower or wider sense, and often one word has more than one possibility. God has not produced a supernatural language in order to be like a photographic plate. But He has used human language in such a way to convey his ideas He wants conveyed to us and to convey a great deal more than is immediately obvious to us in a casual reading. But He has left many things without our being told what they mean. When the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection, Jesus drew near and talked to them. Was it two men? Was it a man and a woman? We do not know. God has not revealed it. There are those possibilities in the Word, and we just saw an example in the case of when God put His hand forth and touched Jeremiah's mouth. Inerrancy means that carefully interpreted, whatever we find is true. There is no error in it. But it does not mean that there is a degree of precision greater than what was intended.

I might say San Francisco is 3,000 miles from here. Somebody might say, "Oh that's completely wrong. It is 2,972.5 miles from here." So is 3,000 miles wrong? No.

You don't say that because 3,000 miles is a good approximation. Now if it is near 2,900 you might say 2,900. But even if somebody gives us the exact number of miles, the distance may still not be exactly correct because it might be half a mile or a quarter mile or and eighth mile, or something off. So you get it down to feet or inches, but does it really enhance your understanding of the distance to San Francisco? The difference between the diameter and the circumference of a circle has been mathematically figured out to, for rough purposes, 3.14. For a little more accuracy, we say 3.1416. Even more accurate than that, we say 3.1415923536. But you can go for a couple of hundred figures beyond and still it does not reach an end. There is not a precise, accurate, exact statement for this ratio we call *pi*, but it is accurate enough for the purposes we want to use it for, and that's the way with the Bible. Some people have a very twisted idea of inerrancy that would simply be impossible in view of the nature of human work. But as far as we can properly draw a meaning from these words that God has given us in the Bible, that meaning is accurate and correct – that is what we mean by inerrancy.

**God's words in Jeremiah's mouth: Purpose statement (Jer 1:9-10) [26:50-27:43]**

And so the Lord said to Jeremiah, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:9-10) – a beautiful figurative statement. When did Jeremiah ever uproot a nation? When did he ever tear down and destroy a nation? It is a statement that God would protect Jeremiah amid all the confusion and changes among the nations and that God would use Jeremiah as His spokesman, not merely to his own country, but to other countries roundabout and enable him to know



what God was going to cause to happen regarding his own nation and other nations in times to come. In preparing Jeremiah for the difficult task, He gives him this strong statement about how God is going to speak through Jeremiah in such a way as only the omnipotent God could do.

**Vision of the almond tree—“watching” word play (Jer 1:11-12) [27:44-30:17]**

Then, “The word of the LORD came to me,” as we read in verse 11, and He said, “‘What do you see, Jeremiah?’” (Jeremiah 1:11). What do you see Jeremiah? What does He mean? I see this room, I see these people, I see this ceiling. What do you see? Did God cause Jeremiah to see a vision? Or did Jeremiah just look and see what was there and God had him in a place where what he’d see was what God wanted to call attention to? Personally, I lean toward the latter view. I would not be dogmatic about it, but my guess is that Jeremiah was out for a walk in the outskirts of Jerusalem as he got this message from God. So when God said, “What do you see?” Jeremiah looked up and said, “I see an almond tree.”

“ ‘I see the branch of an almond tree,’ I replied. The LORD said to me, ‘You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled’” (Jeremiah 1:11-12). Somebody reading that in English says, “What on earth does that have to do with it? What does it mean that he sees an almond tree and the Lord says, ‘You have seen right because I am watching you’?” Well, we have to realize that the almond tree was the one that first began to bud in the springtime. I don’t know what the origin is of the English word almond, but the Hebrew word means “one who is watching,” looking for something to happen. That is the word – “the watcher” or “one who is watching”. The name is

given to it because it is the first tree that puts forth its buds in the spring, when everything is barren and cold, and it seems that winter will last forever. Then these buds come on the almond tree and you think that spring is coming. And God says, “There are events that are beginning to occur which most people can’t even see yet, but which I am controlling. I have great purposes in the days ahead, and you can be sure--as these events open up and develop--you can be sure that I am controlling them and watching over events that people would never dream are ahead. But I know it all and am controlling it. And Jeremiah, you will be given an opportunity of predicting things before anybody else can see or understand what’s coming. And you will be given the ability to speak in situations in the way that will give God’s message in relation to these developing situations.”

Now of course, these words mean nothing in English if you don’t know the origins of the Hebrew word that the almond tree was called the “watching tree” in Hebrew because it was watching for the coming of spring.

### **Boiling pot vision (Jer 1:13-16) [30:17-32:06]**

And then Jeremiah says, “The word of the LORD came to me again, ‘What do you see?’” What does this mean- again? When is "again"? Does this mean that just as soon as that happened again the Lord said, “What do you see?” Or was that a different day? Was it even a year later? We don’t know. We are not even told when it happened or if it happened all at once or spread over a period of time. But I am inclined to think here that again he was out for a walk, maybe the same walk, perhaps near the suburbs of the city. And there he says, “I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north.” Now this is generally thought to be a representation of a furnace, or a baking oven, that was used in the big

store that provided food for the people in the section of the city and perhaps it was a little tilted so it tended to boil over from the north toward the south.

He sees this tilting away from the north, this boiling pot, and the Lord says to him, “From the north, disaster will be poured upon all who live in the land.” This disaster did not come for a few years at this point. Probably most people at that time thought of it as extremely unlikely that there would be any more such situations. And he says, “from the north,” because the land of Israel faces the Mediterranean on the west and the desert on the east. From the southwest is Egypt from where conquering armies often came, but any group who came from the east would go up north, traveling along the Euphrates river and then dropping down. And so this does not tell just from what country an invasion is going to come, but it is definitely not referring to Egypt, which would be from the South, but referring to one or more of the northern or eastern kingdoms.

### **Kings from the North prediction and fulfillment 40 years later (Jer 1:14)**

**[32:06-33:51]**

In Jeremiah 1:14 it says, "The Lord said, 'I am about to summon all the people of the Northern kingdoms,' declares the Lord. 'Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem.'" Here is a specific prediction given to Jeremiah – there's nothing figurative about it. The kings of the north will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem. In this case, we turn to Jeremiah 39:1, and there we find the statement in the beginning: “And this is how Jerusalem was taken...” In verse three we read, “And all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo- Sarsekim a chief

officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon” (Jeremiah 39:3). It reads a little differently in the King James. This version was made before we were able to read the cuneiform and to get the exact names, but the meaning is identical in any version I know of. These officials, these high officials of the king of Babylon, set up their thrones in the gate of Jerusalem, the place where business was ordinarily transacted, and there they decided who would be taken off into captivity to Babylon, who would be executed on the spot, and who would be permitted to stay in the land of Israel. Here is a specific prediction, fulfilled nearly 40 years later but given to Jeremiah at the very beginning of his ministry. Tremendous things are going to happen during the course of his ministry, but Jeremiah will steadfastly speak the word of God, although often with great internal turmoil.

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