

**HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS: BEING THE
PROPHECIES ARRANGED
CHRONOLOGICALLY IN
THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING WITH
EXPLANATIONS AND GLOSSARY. PART
III: JEREMIAH**

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How to Read the Prophets: Being the Prophecies Arranged Chronologically in Their Historical Setting with Explanations and Glossary. Part III: Jeremiah by Buchanan Blake

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BUCHANAN BLAKE

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HOW TO READ JEREMIAH.

HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

BEING THE PROPHECIES
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN THEIR
HISTORICAL SETTING

WITH EXPLANATIONS, MAP, AND GLOSSARY

BY

REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.

PART III.

JEREMIAH

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THIS volume is the third part of a work in which the words of the prophets are arranged in their historic setting, and as far as possible in their chronological order, that so the reader may be impressed with their original force, and appreciate their special contribution to the course and development of Old Testament religion. The prophecies of Jeremiah require such an arrangement almost more than any other book in the Old Canon. Owing to the blending of history and prophecy found here, separation and replacing are desirable. The particular epochs around which Jeremiah's activity gathered are well marked; and these should be clearly stated. There is also to be traced a progress and advance in the thought of the prophet, as he moves on from the more hopeful position he assumed in the early reformation of Josiah, through the teaching of the Law Book, to the more distinctly spiritual, with its exalted idealism, in the prophetic forecasting of the future days.

As a prophet, Jeremiah is one of the noblest figures in Old Testament history. Living at a time of transition, his life has an almost tragic interest. As a teacher, his religious influence was immense, and in many points touches our modern spirit. Many of the Psalms, the Book of Lamentations, as also that of Job, have been ascribed to him as their author. But for none of this is there evidence sufficiently strong. And though manifestly exposed to great trials, he appears not so much a "weeping prophet" as a "man of God," conserving true religion, moulding "the dialect of stated prayer," and affording much material, and many a suggestion, for those psalms that some have traced to him.

As in the other two volumes of this work, already published, in the smaller pre-exilian prophets and Isaiah, prose and poetry have been distinguished, while all chapter and verse divisions have been removed. The historical portions, which, in the previous parts, had to be selected from the Books of Kings and Chronicles, are for the most part found in the prophetic book before us. Attention must be given to these if we would ascertain the exact message of Jeremiah, and secure due emphasis for the "Thus saith the Lord."

The great question, raised in connection with Jeremiah, is the amount of value to be given to the version of the Septuagint : and decisions come to here influence our judgment as to the value of this version elsewhere. Opinion in regard to this matter has swung from an extreme approval to an extreme depreciation. It so happens that the LXX. is so very much shorter than the Hebrew Text, $\frac{1}{3}$ th or 2700 words shorter : and the question is, whether or not it is an abbreviation of an early Hebrew Text : whether or not it is the original of which the Hebrew is an enlarged and later edition, or finally, whether or not there were two originals—one in Hebrew, circulating in Palestine, the other, a briefer one, circulating in Egypt. Decision on such questions is now almost impossible. In our printing of the Text, however, we have endeavoured to furnish material for judgment as to the value of many of the LXX. renderings. The most important variations are italicised in the Text, and given in an appendix. It is sufficient for our purpose here simply to draw attention to this matter : and to urge that, as for the Book of Ezekiel, the LXX. is a "perfectly trustworthy witness to the Hebrew Text, as used at Alexandria in the third century B.C."

Comparatively few passages in the prophecies before us have been denied to Jeremiah. Among these are chap. x. 1-16, and chaps. l. and li. : while chaps. xxx.-xxxiii. have received, some think, additions at the hand of a later editor. Chap. lii. is an historical passage.

The very special characteristics of an Old Testament prophet