

# The Weekly Haftorah

By: Reuben Ebrahimoff -The Haftorahman

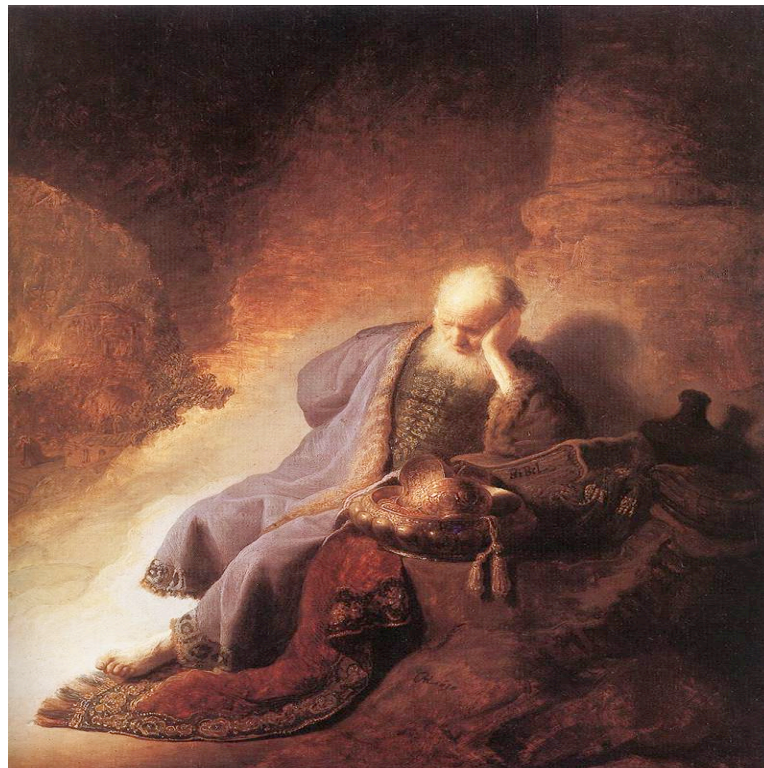
## The Haftorah for Parshat Matos

The Prophet Yirmiyahu's (Jeremiah The Prophet) Appointment,

Visions of the Future, and a Message of Hope

The Haftorah is read from the book of Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah), 1:1-2:3.

It is the first of the 3 special Haftorahs read before Tisha B'av, the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av.



Jeremiah - The Weeping Prophet By: Rembrandt

**The connection of the Haftorah to the Parsha:** The Haftorah of the first forty-one Sidrot, weekly torah portions, is related to, one or more points touched upon in its Sidrah. After the Destruction of the Second Temple however, the sages ordained that the Haftorah read on the three Shabbatot (Sabbaths) between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz and the ninth of Av, be drawn from the prophecies that forewarned the nation of the First Temple's Destruction. On the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the enemies of Israel breached Jerusalem's walls, and on the Ninth of Av each of the two Temples was burned to the ground. The three Haftorahs are called the Telasa De'pha'ra'nu'sa - the three of affliction. They are the opening chapters of Jeremiah and Isaiah, each

threatening the dire consequences that would be visited upon Israel in response to its sinfulness. Nevertheless, each of the Haftorahs of gloom ends on a note of hope and inspiration.



A Drawing of the Holy Temple

**The storyline of this week's Haftorah:** We are introduced to Yirmiyahu by being told that he is the son of Chilkiyahu, a Cohen that lived in the priestly city of Anatot, in the region of Binyamin, which was 2 miles north of Jerusalem. We are told that Yirmiyahu had a prophetic experience during the reigns of the kings Yoshiyahu ben Amon, king of Judah, in his 13<sup>th</sup> year as king and Yahoyakim, son of Yoshiyahu, the king of Judah. While still in his mother's womb, Yirmiyahu was approached by God and told that "from the time he leaves his mothers womb, he will be a prophet of the people". He replied "I am not old enough to do this job" to which God replied "Do not fear, I will protect you". In response to Yirmiyahu declining the position, Hashem reached out and told Yirmiyahu that he would let the necessary words flow from his mouth. Hashem spoke to Yirmiyahu in a vision and asked him "What do you see?" Yirmiyahu replied "I see an almond tree's branch". The almond tree sprouts faster than any other tree in the world. Specifically, it sprouts after 21 days, exactly the amount of days between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz, and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av (Tisha B'Av). This prophecy was symbolic of the rapid surrounding and destroying of the first Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple). Hashem spoke to Yirmiyahu again, asking Yirmiyahu what he sees. Yirmiyahu replied that "he sees a boiling pot with its contents spoiling over from south to north". This vision was symbolic of the outpouring of the enemy nation of Babylon. This is the prediction that the Babylonians will overcome the Jews in their own land. Hashem gives Yirmiyahu encouragement not to be afraid of the visions. The Haftorah concludes with Yirmiyahu's first message to the Jewish people; to do teshuvah, repentance.

## Seal of Baruch, Jeremiah's Scribe

Baruch, son of Neriah, Jeremiah's scribe; Jer. 32:17, 43:1-7

Seal imprinted on a clay bulla, 650-600 B.C.

fingerprint of user



Collection of Shlomo Mussaieff London

"belonging to Berekh-Yahu, son of Neriyahu, the scribe"



Hershel Shanks, BAR 22:2,96

### Yirmiyahu's Biography:

- The meaning of his name is "Hashem will elevate".
- Was born to his father Chilkiya, also a prophet, in 640 B.C.E., about 2650 years ago on Tisha B'av in Anatot, 2 miles north of Jerusalem, in the land of Binyamin. He was born circumcised, a sign of a spiritually elevated person.
- Was a Kohen and a descendant of Rachav, the Yericho (Jericho) innkeeper that Yehoshua saved.
- Spoke at childhood, cursing the day he was born. Began prophesying at age 18, continuing for 40 years.
- Lived in Jerusalem. He never married, and had no children.
- Was the head of the Mishmeret Hakohanim (The Guard of the Priests doing work in the Holy Temple). They were the custodians of the Ark of the Lord.
- Known as the Weeping Prophet, for he endured the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Symbolically, he wore a wooden yolk around his neck.
- His prophecies took place before, during, and after the destruction of the Bait Hamikdash (Holy Temple). Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon destroyed the Temple. He remained in Jerusalem after its destruction with Gedaliah ben Achikam, the man whom the fast of Gedaliah is named after. Shafan was his scribe. Shafan brought the scroll he found in the Bait Hamikdash to Jeremiah, which was originally written by Moses. It was open to the

verse "Hashem will bring you and your elected King to a nation unknown to your fathers." That scared people into changing their ways.

- We are told that Yirmiyahu had a prophetic experience during the reign of the king Yoshiyahu ben Amon, king of Judah in his 13th year as king. Yirmiyahu also has prophecies in the days of king Yehoyakim, son of Yoshiyahu, the king of Judah. According to some commentaries, Jeremiah was stoned to death after fleeing to Alexandria, Egypt.
- Wrote 3 Books: His own, Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah); Eicha (Lamentations), read on Tisha B'Av; and Melachim (The Book of Kings). The time span of the book Jeremiah was 66 years.



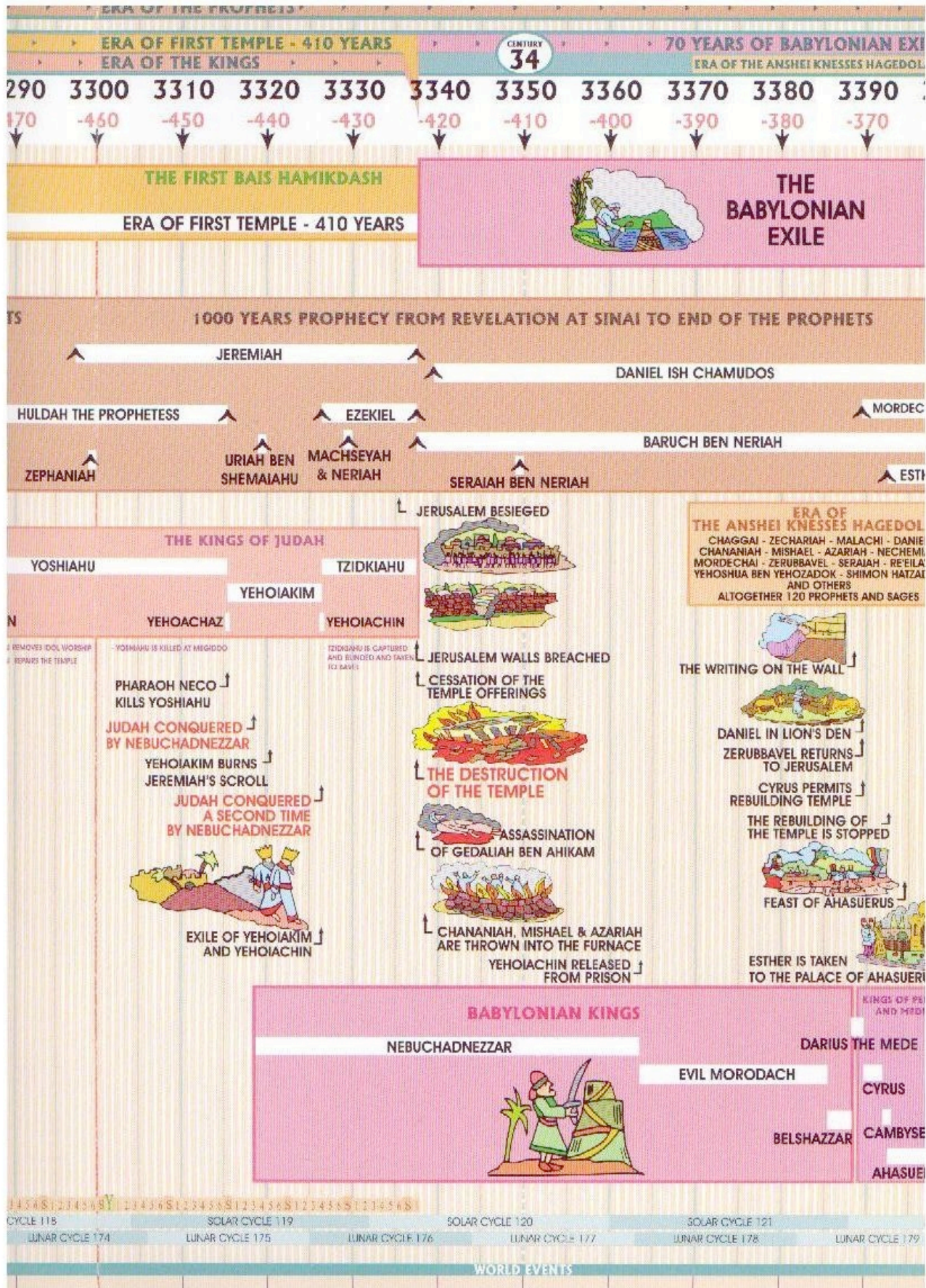
A drawing of The Israelites being exiled after Nebuchadnezzar burns down the 1<sup>st</sup> Beit HaMikdash.

Drawing: Temple Institute

**Famous phrases:** Jeremiah 31:10, "Ki fadah Hashem et Yaakov u'g'alo miyad chazak mimenu." "For Hashem will have redeemed Jacob and delivered him from a hand mightier than him." Recited just before the first blessing after Shema Yisrael during Ma'ariv.

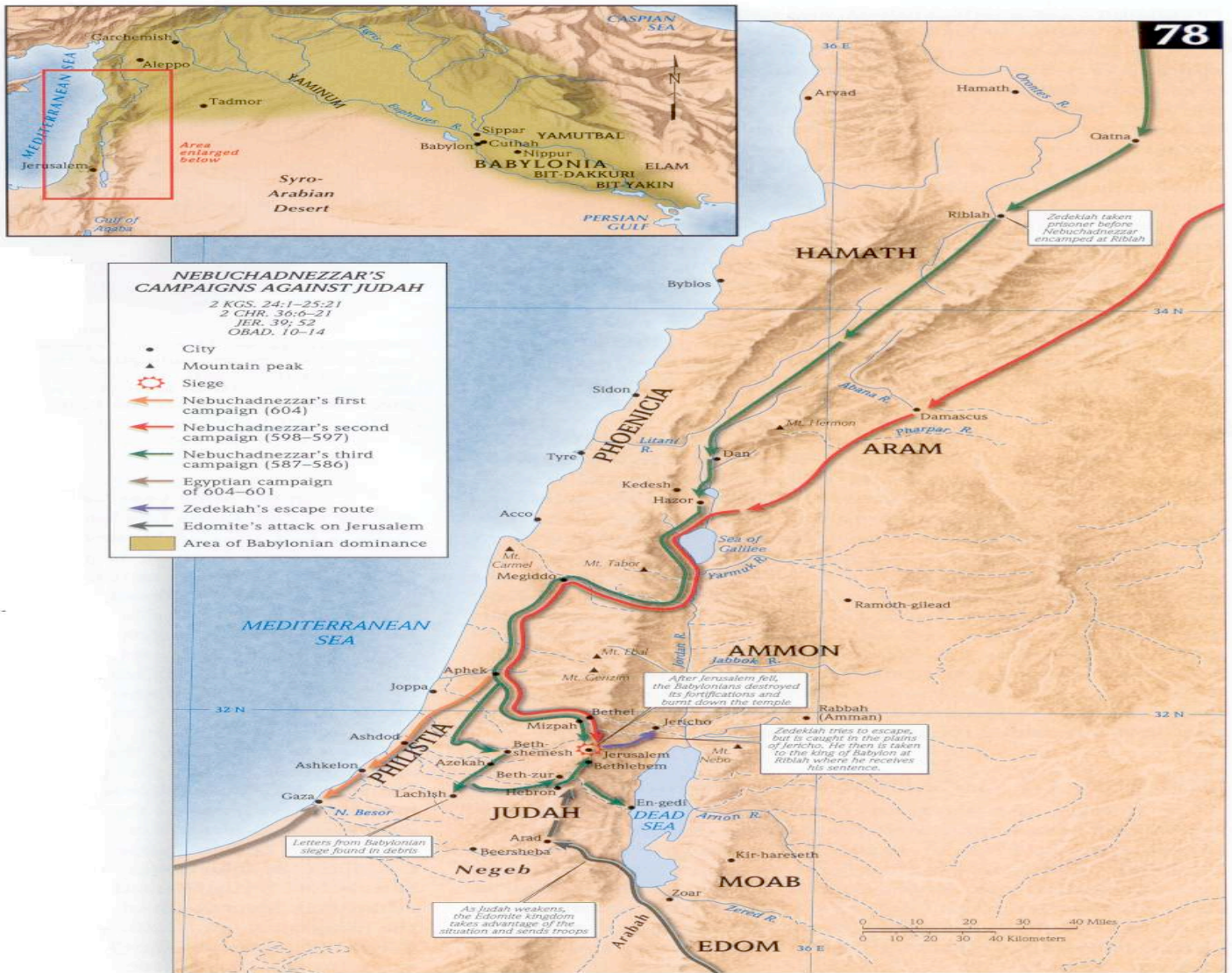
**Haftorahman's lesson of the week:** Hashem told Jeremiah the Prophet that he has to confront his fears and deal with them head on! Jeremiah was sent to earth to deliver the message of "repent or else", without fear of the response.

**Timeline:** The Prophecies of Jeremiah took place in the Jewish Years from 3300 to 3337.



Timeline by: Ephraim Waxman, Dor L'Dor, Feldheim Publishing

**Map:** The Haftorah takes place in Jerusalem.



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