

Jeremiah 1:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

Analysis

This opening verse introduces Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, identifying him as part of the priestly line from Anathoth in Benjamin's territory. The phrase 'the words of Jeremiah' (divre Yirmeyahu, דִבְרֵי יִרְמֵיהוּ) frames the entire book as prophetic utterance—not merely human opinion but divinely inspired revelation. Jeremiah's name means 'Yahweh exalts' or 'Yahweh throws/establishes,' foreshadowing his role in announcing both judgment (God 'throwing down' nations) and restoration (God 'establishing' His purposes). His priestly heritage from Hilkiah connects him to Israel's covenant traditions and temple worship, providing credibility for his later critiques of false religion. Anathoth, located about three miles northeast of Jerusalem, was one of the Levitical cities assigned to Aaron's descendants (Joshua 21:18). This geographical and genealogical specificity grounds the prophecy in verifiable historical reality, distinguishing biblical revelation from mythological literature.

Historical Context

Jeremiah prophesied during one of Judah's most turbulent periods (approximately 627-585 BC), from King Josiah's reforms through Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon. Anathoth's priestly community descended from Abiathar, whom Solomon exiled there after backing Adonijah's failed coup (1 Kings 2:26-27), fulfilling judgment on Eli's house (1 Samuel 2:31-36). This background shaped Jeremiah's perspective—he came from a priestly line under divine curse yet was called to prophesy. Archaeological excavations at Anata (modern Anathoth site) confirm Iron

Age settlement. Jeremiah's ministry overlapped with other prophets including Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and later Ezekiel and Daniel in exile.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's priestly background inform his prophetic message about authentic versus superficial worship?
2. What does the specificity of Jeremiah's identification teach us about God's involvement in actual human history rather than abstract religious ideas?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר	רְקִבְבָּנִים	מִן	חֶלְקֵי	הָוֶה	בֶּן	וְרַמְּנֵי	הָוֶה	דְּבָרָה	וְ
The words	of Jeremiah	the son	of Hilkiah						
H1697	H3414	H1121	H2518	H4480					
that were in Anathoth	in the land	of Benjamin							
H6068	H776	H1144							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 11:21 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophesy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

1 Chronicles 6:60 (Parallel theme): And out of the tribe of Benjamin; Geba with her suburbs, and Alemeth with her suburbs, and Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.

Ezekiel 1:3 (Word): The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

2 Chronicles 36:21 (Word): To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

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