

Jeremiah 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

Analysis

This verse establishes the chronological framework for Jeremiah's call, dating it to King Josiah's thirteenth year (approximately 627 BC). The phrase 'the word of the LORD came unto him' (hayah debar-YHWH elav, הָיָה דְּבָר־יְהוָה אֲלֵיכָם) is the classic formula for prophetic revelation throughout Scripture, emphasizing divine initiative—God spoke to Jeremiah, not vice versa. The verb 'came' (hayah, הָיָה, literally 'became' or 'occurred') indicates a definite event when God's word entered prophetic consciousness. This wasn't gradual religious enlightenment but specific divine communication at a particular historical moment. Josiah's reign (640-609 BC) was marked by religious reforms after discovering the Book of the Law during temple repairs (2 Kings 22-23). Jeremiah's call during Josiah's reign positions him as both supporter of genuine reform and subsequent critic of its superficiality—many people changed external practices without heart transformation.

Historical Context

Josiah became king at age eight after his father Amon's assassination (2 Kings 21:23-26). His reforms, beginning in his twelfth year and intensifying after discovering the Law scroll in his eighteenth year, attempted to reverse the idolatry of his grandfather Manasseh's fifty-five-year reign—the longest and wickedest in Judah's history. Jeremiah's call in Josiah's thirteenth year (627 BC) places it amid these reform efforts and coincides with Assyria's declining power. The Assyrian capital Nineveh fell in 612 BC, creating a power vacuum that Babylon filled. This geopolitical shift forms the backdrop for Jeremiah's prophecies about 'the enemy'

from the north' (Babylon). Some scholars debate whether Jeremiah was active during early Josiah years or began more visibly after the king's death, but the text clearly dates his call to this period.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the phrase 'the word of the LORD came unto him' reveal about the nature of biblical prophecy versus human religious insight?
2. How might Jeremiah's call during Josiah's reform period have shaped his understanding of the difference between external religious change and authentic heart transformation?

Interlinear Text

בְּיֹם	וְ	אֵל	וְ	יְהֹוָה	דִּבֶּר	אֲשֶׁר	הִנֵּה	בְּיֹם
H413				H3068	H1697			H3117
came	in	the	days					
of Josiah	the son	of Amon	king	of Judah	in the thirteenth			H6240
H2977	H1121	H526	H4428	H3063	H7969			
לְמַלְכָּה:	שָׁתַּה	הָ	לְ	מֶלֶךְ	בְּשָׁלַש	הָ	שָׁשֶׁר	הָ
year	of his reign							
H8141	H4427							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:4 (Word): Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jeremiah 1:11 (Word): Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

Jonah 1:1 (Word): Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

1 Kings 13:20 (Word): And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

Hosea 1:1 (Kingdom): The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Micah 1:1 (Kingdom): The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

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