

# Josephus's Portrayal of Jeremiah: A Portrait and a Self-Portrait

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Authors of history leave indelible footprints in their works. Many clues can be found in any historical work of how a historian's individual worldview shades and colors his or her narrative. Some ancient historians include an account of their own life in their work, selecting and shaping the evidence they choose to present in a carefully contrived self-portrait. A sensitive reader can discover many clues about the author through a careful reading of his work. One of the most fascinating ancient writers is the Jewish historian Josephus, whose works have preserved a wealth of information both about the biblical world that preceded him and his own life and times.

Josephus wrote four works that have survived: *Antiquities*, which is a retelling of biblical history from Adam and Eve to the time of the Jewish war against Rome; *Jewish War*, an account of the disastrous Jewish revolt against Rome that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; *Life*, an autobiography; and a short tractate called *Against Apion*, which is a defense of Judaism in light of false propaganda being spread by a certain Apion.

At the beginning of his *Antiquities*, Josephus explains that his narrative will be a complete retelling of the scriptural record:

The precise details of our Scripture records will, then, be set forth, each in its place, as my narrative proceeds, that being the procedure that I have promised to follow throughout this work, neither adding nor omitting anything. (*Antiquities* 1.17) <sup>1</sup>

And later in his discussion of Daniel, Josephus writes:

But let no one reproach me for recording in my work each of these events as I have found them in the ancient books, for at the very beginning of my History I safeguarded myself against those who might find something wanting in my narrative or find fault with it, and said that I was only translating the books of the Hebrews into the Greek tongue, promising to report their contents without adding anything of my own to the narrative or omitting anything therefrom. (*Antiquities* 10.218)

In both passages Josephus claims that his narrative neither adds to nor omits from the Hebrew scriptures. But a reader of Josephus's *Antiquities* will find everything but a methodical paraphrase of the Old Testament. Some divergence might be expected since Josephus's biblical text, or texts, are not necessarily those of the Masoretic tradition. But Josephus's work appears rather to be a carefully contrived narrative that diverges widely from biblical traditions—contrary to his claim—through both addition and omission.

A comparison of Josephus's paraphrase of scriptural history in *Antiquities* with the Bible and an examination of his self-portrayal in his other works shows that in many cases a pattern appears in his additions and omissions. Josephus compares himself with biblical characters. Scholars have noted several biographical details of Josephus's life that appear in *Jewish War* and *Life* that have dramatic parallels with the accounts of some of the characters in his narratives, such as Joseph of Egypt, Saul, Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai.<sup>2</sup> The specific nature of these parallels suggests that they influenced Josephus's understanding and depiction of history in his writings, both in the way he

portrays himself, as well as in the way he depicts the persons in his narrative. By shaping his account of biblical characters as well as his own self-portrayal, he highlights and emphasizes many parallels.

Most of the parallels between Josephus and biblical personalities are grounded in historical happenstance. For example, as Joseph (Josephus's namesake in the Bible) made the most of his captivity in Egypt, and likewise Daniel in Babylon and Persia, so Josephus himself managed to survive and flourish in Rome. Furthermore, Joseph, Daniel, and Josephus all saw and interpreted dreams. Saul, like Josephus, was a general. Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai share common ground with Josephus as "valued advisers to the head of the host country."<sup>3</sup> Other similarities are created from the speeches Josephus records both of biblical personages as well as his own. Likewise, Josephus seems to create occasional parallels by including details (not found in the biblical text) about the lives of biblical characters that match aspects of his own life as he records it.

Here we attempt to examine systematically Josephus's depiction of Jeremiah in light of his comparison of himself with Old Testament prophets. An examination of the parallels reveals the richness of Josephus's narrative, both in terms of his paraphrase of the Old Testament found in *Antiquities* as well as in his depiction of himself and his times. In addition, we gain insight into Josephus's narrative art and his method of recounting the history of his people. And finally, by the way Josephus portrays himself we can better discern how Josephus understood himself and his times and how he wished his audience to understand his role in the history of Israel. In short, we can see how Josephus writes himself into the history of Israel.

Josephus particularly identified with those in the prophetic tradition who had the power to predict the future—most notably Joseph, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Josephus himself claimed to have the gift of interpreting dreams and thus of foreseeing the future. He saw himself in the prophetic tradition as one chosen by God to use his gifts in the service of his fellow Jews. He records his "prophetic call" when he was hiding in a cave, after the fall of Jotapata, awaiting the Romans. At that time suddenly there came back into his mind those nightly dreams in which God foretold the impending fate of the Jews and the destinies of the Roman sovereigns. He was an interpreter of dreams and skilled in divining the meaning of ambiguous utterances of God;

a priest himself and of priestly descent, he was not ignorant of the prophecies in the sacred books. At that hour he was inspired to read their meaning, and, recalling the dreadful images of his recent dreams, he offers up a silent prayer to God.

Since it pleases thee, who didst create the Jewish nation, to break thy work, since fortune [*Tyche*] has wholly passed to the Romans, and since thou hast made choice of my spirit to announce the things that are to come, I willingly surrender to the Romans and consent to live; but I take thee to witness that I go, not as a traitor, but as thy minister [*diakonos*]. (*Jewish War* 3.351–54)

Josephus's gift to predict the future saved his life. He told Vespasian that one day he (Vespasian) would be emperor (see *Jewish War* 3.400–402); with the fulfillment of that prophecy, Josephus acquired the patronage of the Flavians, whose support made his entire literary career possible.

## Josephus and Jeremiah

Because of his gift Josephus shows great interest in other prominent prophets in Israel, especially those who interpret dreams like himself, and this identification presumably influenced his extensive portrayal of the careers and prophecies of Joseph and Daniel in *Antiquities*. However, the only prophet he explicitly compares himself to is

Jeremiah—a prophet who lived in a similar historical period, in whose time Jerusalem was captured and the temple was destroyed. Furthermore, Jeremiah’s message to his countrymen was the same as that of Josephus—surrender or be destroyed. In his address to the zealots in the besieged city of Jerusalem, Josephus says:

Thus, when the king of Babylon besieged this city, our king Zedekiah having, contrary to the prophetic warnings of Jeremiah, given him battle, was himself taken prisoner and saw the town and the temple leveled to the ground. Yet, how much more moderate was that monarch than your leaders, and his subjects than you! For, though Jeremiah loudly proclaimed that they were hateful to God for their transgressions against Him, and would be taken captive unless they surrendered the city, neither the king nor the people put him to death. But you—to pass over those scenes within, for it would be beyond me adequately to portray your enormities—you, I say, assail with abuse and missiles me who exhort you to save yourselves, exasperated at being reminded of your sins and intolerant of any mention of those crimes which you actually perpetrate every day. (*Jewish War* 5.391–93)

This comparison is central to a discussion and understanding of Josephus’s portrayal of Jeremiah in *Antiquities* and his depiction of himself. Many of the parallels have been variously noted by different scholars.<sup>4</sup> Here we will attempt a comprehensive summary of these parallels with further refinement and several additions.

We will organize and present the parallels between Jeremiah and Josephus in three categories: first, those that can be attributed to historical happenstance; second, examples of similar theological understandings; and third, a group of parallels, which David Daube calls “retrofigurements,” that have been created by Josephus’s inserting or “retrojecting” nonbiblical material into his account of Jeremiah.

## Historical Happenstance

In this category we find parallels between Jeremiah and Josephus that emerge in the writings of Josephus both by what he chooses to add and to emphasize and what he chooses to omit in his narrative of the story of Jeremiah and in his portrayal of himself.

- **Both were from priestly families and claimed prophetic gifts.** Jeremiah was named a prophet and a priest (see Jeremiah 1:1, 5; *Antiquities* 10.80) and was called to deliver the word of the Lord to his people. Josephus reserves the use of the word *prophētēs* for the canonical prophets; nevertheless, he does consider himself a successor to the prophets and calls himself a “minister” (*diakonos*, *Jewish War* 3.354).<sup>5</sup> He claims the Hasmonean John Hyrcanus as his ancestor who, he says, possessed the “gift of prophecy” (*Jewish War* 1.68). Josephus also was from a priestly family (see *Life* 1.1). Thus he valued the connection between priests and prophets.<sup>6</sup>
- **Both had missions to the world beyond the Jews.** Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to the nations (see Jeremiah 1:5, 10). Josephus perceives himself as writing to both the Jews and the Greeks (see *Jewish War* 1.3). Josephus never emphasizes this point for Jeremiah but does in behalf of himself (see *Antiquities* 1.5).
- **Both had the gift of prophecy.** Jeremiah had the gift of foretelling the future (see Jeremiah 1:12; *Antiquities* 10.79), as did Josephus (see *Jewish War* 3.351–54). Jeremiah predicted the ascendancy of Babylon and the consequent capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the exile of Judah. Josephus likewise foretold the ascendancy of Rome and the ensuing destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the people. Interestingly enough, Josephus attributes his ability to foretell the future to his capacity to receive and interpret divine dreams. Jeremiah, in chapters 23, 27, and 29, presents several

polemics against those who receive “false” dreams—which chapters Josephus conveniently avoids. Likewise, Jeremiah predicts the restoration and resurgence of Israel (see Jeremiah 30—33), as does Josephus in his cautious paraphrase of Daniel’s vision of the stone that will come forth (see Daniel 2:34—45).

- *Both suffered physical abuse and were threatened with death.* Jeremiah suffered physical abuse because of his message and was threatened with execution (see Jeremiah 26:8—24; 36:19—26; 37:13—21; 38:4—13; and *Antiquities* 10.88—95, 114—23). Likewise, Josephus was physically abused and threatened for his message (see *Jewish War* 3.355—61, 383—86; 5:391—94).
- *Both advised their countrymen to surrender to the enemy.* Jeremiah prophesied that the only hope to save Jerusalem was to surrender to the Babylonians (see Jeremiah 38; *Antiquities* 10.117, 125—26). Josephus delivered the same message to his countrymen—to surrender to Rome or be destroyed (see *Jewish War* 5.415—19).
- *Both were opposed by false prophets who assured the people that the Lord would deliver them and the city would be preserved.* Jeremiah was opposed by those who assured the people that an alliance with Egypt would defeat Babylon, those in exile would return shortly, and the city would be preserved (see Jeremiah 27—28; *Antiquities* 10.104, 111—12). Josephus records that a series of false prophets promised that God would intervene and deliver them from the Romans (see *Jewish War* 6.285).
- *Both were accused of treason and had to justify their actions.* Jeremiah was considered a traitor for his exhortation to surrender and for the effect this had on a people under siege (see Jeremiah 36:9—31; 37:11—15; 38:1—6; *Antiquities* 10.114—15, 119). Unlike Jeremiah, Josephus actually defected to the enemy. He justifies himself by saying that he went not as a deserter but as a minister to his people (see *Jewish War* 3.130, 136—37, 354). Both were considered traitors by their countrymen for their stance and had to justify themselves.
- *After the destruction both had a friendly relationship with the victors as a reward for their stance.* Jeremiah received a food allowance and a gift (see Jeremiah 40:5; *Antiquities* 10.157). Josephus received the freedom of some of his countrymen, a gift of sacred books, as well as land and a stipend (see *Life* 418—23). One important difference is that Jeremiah chose to stay with his people rather than to go with the victor; Josephus went to Rome under the patronage of the Flavian household.
- *After the destruction both continued to advise the surviving remnant of their people.* Jeremiah remained in the land, where as prophet he continued to advise a group of people. After the death of Gedaliah, he went with the people to Egypt (see Jeremiah 42—44). In addition he wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon (see Jeremiah 29). Josephus wrote his first account of the war to his fellow Jews in Mesopotamia (see *Jewish War* 1.3, 6), and his later writings were intended to explain and defend Jews and Judaism both to Jews and to gentiles.

### Possible Theological Parallels

Some of the most intriguing parallels between Jeremiah and Josephus are of a theological nature; their speeches contained similar teachings. In most of these parallels it is clear that Josephus is patterning himself after the model of Jeremiah.

- *Both interpreted the imminent destruction of Jerusalem as a result of the judgment of God because of the wickedness of the people.* Jeremiah, in his temple sermon, enumerates the sins of the people for which judgment is imminent: not executing justice; oppressing the alien, widow, and orphan; shedding innocent blood; stealing; murder; adultery; swearing falsely; and idolatry (see Jeremiah 7:5—10). In his speech Josephus lists thefts, treacheries, adulteries, rapine, and murder (see *Jewish War* 5.402). Shaye

J. D. Cohen notes further parallels with Jeremiah's list in *Jewish War*: Jews have acted unjustly (see *Jewish War* 4.334—44), oppressed the downtrodden (see *Jewish War* 4.557), killed innocent people in the temple (see *Jewish War* 4.312—44; 5.15—20), stolen (see *Jewish War* 4.312—44; 5.1—20), committed adultery and other sexual crimes (see *Jewish War* 4.558—63), sworn falsely (see *Jewish War* 4.213—14), and polluted the temple (see *Jewish War* 5.401—2).<sup>7</sup>

We should note the significant omission in Josephus's writings of any reference to idolatry; this contrasts sharply with Jeremiah's emphasis on the idolatry of Israel (see, for example, Jeremiah 2—3; 7:29—8:3; 25:1—7; 44:15—28). In retelling the story of Moses and Israel at Sinai, Josephus leaves out any reference to the incident of the golden calf. The quiet omission of instances of idolatry throughout *Antiquities* is typical of Josephus's account, presumably because such a reference might have been offensive to his Roman patronage and readership.

- **Both mention previous destructions of the temple.** In Jeremiah's temple sermon in Jeremiah 7 and 26, he addresses a people who believe the temple will ultimately be preserved and thus save them. Jeremiah uses the example of the previous destruction of the shrine at Shiloh as a warning that the Lord will not preserve a wicked people just because his house is in their midst (see Jeremiah 7:12—15; 26:4—6). In his speech to the zealots, Josephus adopts the same strategy as he recounts the times the people have been preserved and the times they have not. The destruction wrought by the Babylonians serves as his prime example that the Lord would not protect the Jews. Josephus in his speech harks back to the past: "The Babylonians whom I mentioned marched against it [Jerusalem] and captured and burnt both the city and the sanctuary, although the Jews of that day were guilty, I imagine, of no such rank impiety as yours."
- **Both taught that the reason Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed was that God fought on the side of the enemy.** Jeremiah records the words of the Lord: "I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence" (Jeremiah 21:5—6; see Lamentations 2:1—7). Josephus also comprehends that one's faith in the God of Israel depends on understanding why he allowed his city, his house, and his people to be destroyed and scattered; otherwise, one might deduce that the Babylonians and their gods were stronger than Judah and her God. Note Josephus's account of Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Jerusalem:

Nebuchadnezzar began to denounce him [Zedekiah] as an impious wretch and a violator of treaties who had forgotten the words which he had spoken earlier when he had promised to keep the country safely for him. He also reproached him for his ingratitude in having first received the kingdom from him—for Nebuchadnezzar had taken it away from Jehoiachin, to whom it belonged, and given it to him—and then used his power against the one who had bestowed it on him. "But," he said, "great is God who in His abhorrence of your conduct has made you fall into our hands." (*Antiquities* 10.138—39)

Josephus applies this theme emphasized in Jeremiah to his own day. In his speech to the zealots, he proclaims, "My belief, therefore, is that the Deity has fled from the holy places and taken His stand on the side of those with whom you are now at war" (*Jewish War* 5.412). Furthermore, Josephus records that Titus, on his initial survey of the fallen Jerusalem, exclaims: "God indeed has been with us in the war. God it was who brought down the Jews from these strongholds; for what power have human hands or engines against these towers?" (*Jewish War* 6.411—13).

- **Both understand the will of God is manifested throughout history in the order of kingdoms.** This concept goes beyond the event of the destruction of Jerusalem. Both Jeremiah and Josephus understand that the will of God is manifested throughout history in the order of kingdoms. Jeremiah understands Babylon to

be a servant of God in the course of history (see Jeremiah 27:1—15; 43:10); eventually the time will come for Babylon to be punished and replaced by the next kingdom—the Persians (see Jeremiah 50—51). Josephus declares that in his time “fortune [*Tyche*] has wholly passed to the Romans” (*Jewish War* 3.354). Josephus also includes several prophecies of Daniel in *Antiquities*, which also promote this idea. Jeremiah insists that one must hearken to the word of the Lord. In some instances Judah should not make alliances with foreign powers, and in other situations—namely the time of Jeremiah—the will of the Lord was for Judah to surrender to Babylon. In a similar vein the role of prophecy for Josephus is to identify the divinely ordained kingdom of the present, and the role of the individual is to conform himself to that kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

- ***Both believed in an ultimate resurgence of the nation after a period of subservience.*** Jeremiah’s writings include a whole series of prophecies about the return from exile and the “building and planting” of the people (Jeremiah 30—32). He prophesies that the exile would last seventy years (see Jeremiah 25; *Antiquities* 10.110). Josephus gives hints in his speech that if the people repent they can reestablish a relationship with the Lord; he also implies a future resurgence of the Jews (see *Jewish War* 5.377—419). He reminded the Jews that God had always eventually avenged them: “When did God who created, fail to avenge, the Jews, if they were wronged” (*Jewish War* 5.377). Unlike Jeremiah, who prophesied a return in seventy years, Josephus gives no explicit timetable for the restoration of the Jews. The Bar Kokhba revolt occurred in A.D. 132—35—sixty-five years after the captivity in A.D. 70, and one of the Bar Kokhba coins features a depiction of the temple. It is possible that the anticipation of a return in seventy years played a part in the timing of this revolt.

One of the most astonishing passages is found in Josephus’s paraphrase of Daniel. When Josephus reports on the prophecy of the resurgence of the kingdom of God as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands that would destroy the giant and fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:34—45), he says:

And Daniel also revealed to the king the meaning of the stone, but I have not thought it proper to relate this, since I am expected to write of what is past and done and not of what is to be; if, however, there is anyone who has so keen a desire for exact information that he will not stop short of inquiring more closely but wishes to learn about the hidden things to come, let him take the trouble to read the Book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings. (*Antiquities* 10.210)

Regarding this passage, Daube points out that

it is remarkable how much of a viewpoint utterly irreconcilable with the Roman he [Josephus] managed to bring before his public. Take his belief that, in the end, it is the Jews who will triumph; actually, that moment will arrive as soon as they whole-heartedly submit to God. To be sure, he puts it reticently, even obliquely, but no one who paid heed could miss it.<sup>9</sup>

- ***Both emphasize the foolishness of trusting in the arm of flesh.*** Jeremiah says, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm. . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is” (Jeremiah 17:5—7). And Josephus writes, “Thus invariably have arms been refused to our nation, and warfare has been the sure signal for defeat. For it is, I suppose, the duty of the occupants of holy ground to leave everything to the arbitrament of God and to scorn the aid of human hands” (*Jewish War* 5.399—400).

**Possible “Retrofigurements”**

Several of the parallels between the lives of Jeremiah and Josephus are based on details—having no basis in extant scripture or tradition—that Josephus interjects into his narrative about Jeremiah. It is possible that such details about Jeremiah were available to Josephus in other textual traditions that have not survived. It is also possible that these details were deliberately introduced by Josephus. Daube calls these possible “retrofigurements” or “retrojections” of things that Josephus had experienced back to the time of Jeremiah.<sup>10</sup>

- *Josephus portrays Jeremiah exhorting Zedekiah to surrender to the Babylonians, just as in the Bible, in order to save his life and the city (see Jeremiah 38:17—23), but adds the nonbiblical detail to save the temple as well (see Antiquities 10.126, 128).*<sup>11</sup> This matches Josephus’s speech to the zealots in which he emphasizes the destruction of the city and the temple at the time of Zedekiah and encourages the inhabitants to surrender and save the temple (see *Jewish War* 5.362, 391, 406, 411).

Josephus introduces an interesting twist here. In Jeremiah’s temple sermon he warns the people that the temple will not save them. In Josephus’s version, both in his account of Jeremiah, as well as in his own case, the warning is that the people must surrender in order to save the temple—a twist that reflects Josephus’s perspective.

- *Josephus includes the nonbiblical detail at the time the Babylonians granted Jeremiah his freedom (see Jeremiah 40:1) that Jeremiah requested of Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian general, the release of his scribe Baruch (see Antiquities 10.156, 58).*<sup>12</sup> This parallels Josephus’s record that after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, he made a petition to Titus, the Roman general, for the release of his brother and friends and acquaintances (see *Life* 418—20).<sup>13</sup> Daube calls this a possible “retrojection” and yet the release of Baruch may be suggested by the biblical text in which the Lord, through Jeremiah, promised Baruch his “life as a prize of war” (Jeremiah 45:1—5), as he did for Ebed-melech (see Jeremiah 39:17—18).
- *Josephus records that Jeremiah “left behind writings concerning the recent capture of [Jerusalem], as well as the capture of Babylon” (Antiquities 10.79).* Thus Josephus presents himself, like Jeremiah, as leaving behind for his people an account of both destructions—the Babylonian and the Roman. Clearly many of Jeremiah’s prophecies refer to Babylon’s capture of Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 7, 26, 34, 36—38, etc.); the prophecies of the fall of Babylon can be found in the Oracles against Foreign Nations (see Jeremiah 50—51). Scholars have debated to which writings of Jeremiah Josephus is referring that relate to the destruction by the Romans. Some have supposed that this passage is a later interpolation. Marcus concludes that Josephus considers the book of Lamentations to be both a lament over the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem as well as a prophecy describing the future destruction by the Romans—a connection that may be suggested by the Jewish tradition that both destructions occurred on the same date—the ninth of Ab.<sup>14</sup>

There may be a better solution. Jeremiah 16:16—18 figuratively speaks of two deportations, one led by fishermen and one by hunters. William Holladay, in his recent commentary on Jeremiah, notes that scholars have variously understood these to be two deportations in 598 and 587 B.C., but Jerome, in his *Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah*,<sup>15</sup> records that the Jews of his day understood the fishermen to be the Babylonians and the hunters to be the Romans.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Josephus’s comment is based on this passage, which could lend itself to such an interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

Numerous, obvious parallels between the prophet Jeremiah and the historian Josephus are brought clearly into focus by Josephus's shaping of his biblical paraphrase and by his self-portrayal. Many of these parallels are obviously grounded in historical happenstance since the two men lived in similar situations; some are reflected in the theological understanding and teachings of the two men; and several of them might be best explained as "retrofigurements" in which Josephus has created a parallel by inserting back into his paraphrase of the life of Jeremiah a detail that happened to him personally.

Clearly one of the principles that guided Josephus in his retelling of the biblical story in *Antiquities* was a shaping of biblical characters to better explain to the world who he himself was; his own self-portrayal at times dramatically matches that of biblical characters. While implicitly creating these comparisons with many other biblical figures (Joseph, Saul, Daniel), Josephus only explicitly compares himself with the prophet Jeremiah. While it is possible that a familiarity with this biblical figure influenced the way Josephus lived his life and conducted himself, it is certain that the account of Jeremiah in the Bible has a great impact on how Josephus introduces himself in his narrative through various techniques: (1) explicit comparison, (2) presenting details that highlight commonalities and ignore obvious differences, such as not mentioning the several passages in Jeremiah critical of those who interpret dreams and Jeremiah's frequent condemnation of idolatry, (3) echoing Jeremiah's rhetoric and theology in the accounts of his own speeches, and (4) enhancing the biblical character with nonbiblical details that further highlight the comparison (Daube's "retrofigurement").

Josephus's identification with Jeremiah and other biblical figures gives his history a sense of self-righteousness. In his own narrative Josephus becomes one of the few individuals, like Jeremiah of old, who had the gift of discernment of the future and the task to teach the will of God to his people. Perhaps he used the life of Jeremiah as a model for his own life; perhaps he created some of the parallels through his literary craft. Josephus portrays himself as a messenger from God who takes his place in the biblical tradition of prophets. While Josephus emphasizes the similarities between himself and the prophet Jeremiah, the differences are crucial. Josephus claims that he had the good sense to follow the "will of God" by treacherously betraying his comrades in the siege of Jotapata and surrendering to the Romans. For this he was rewarded with wealth, opportunity, a wife and family, and a long life—which he used to defend the heritage of his people to the world. In all of this Josephus often suggests his own favored status with God.

Jeremiah too survived the destruction, but he stayed with his people. His forty-year ministry was full of suffering, the laments of which survive in his book and foreshadow the suffering servant who was to come. In the end Jeremiah was forced into exile to Egypt by his own people, without a wife or a family, where he died in silence. Jeremiah's book stands as a witness to his people of his divine calling and of the call to repentance that was rejected and contains an extraordinary record of his prophetic look into the future: of the coming of the Messiah, the restoration of the gospel, and the gathering of Israel. As one who knew the voice of the Lord, Jeremiah had no need to boast of his exalted status with the Lord. We can only imagine how Jeremiah would have portrayed Josephus if he had seen the future life of his countryman.

## Notes

We salute Professor Richard Lloyd Anderson for his many years of excellence in teaching and scholarship and thank him for the warm relationship we have enjoyed with him.

1. All translations of Josephus are from the edition of Henry St. J. Thackeray, Ralph Marcus, Allen Wikgren, and Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus*, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926–1963).



2. See Christopher T. Begg, "The 'Classical Prophets' in Josephus' *Antiquities*," *Louvain Studies* 13 (1988): 341–57; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25/2 (1974): 239–62; Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius," *History and Theory* 21/3 (1982): 366–81; David Daube, "Typology in Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31/1 (1980): 18–36; Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Saul," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53 (1982): 45–99; and Louis H. Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41/2 (1990): 386–422.

3. Daube, "Typology," 33.

4. In particular see Daube, "Typology," and Cohen, "Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius."

5. Josephus, not usually known for precision in his use of terminology, makes a very dramatic distinction in using the word *prophētēs*, reserving it for the canonical prophets. Josephus considers the reign of Artaxerxes as the end of the "succession of the prophets" (*Against Apion* 1.41). This concept matches the rabbinic tradition of the book of Esther as the last book written with prophetic authority. Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy," 400–407, notes the emphasis on "succession" of the prophets, and while a distinction between biblical prophecy and the "prophecy" of others exists, clearly later figures, including Josephus, who are successors to the prophetic tradition in speaking for God, interpret the past and foresee the future.

6. See Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and Priesthood"; Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy."

7. Cohen, "Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius," 371.

8. *Ibid.*, 371–74, contains a more complete discussion of this phenomenon in Jeremiah and Josephus.

9. Daube, "Typology," 34–35. Josephus's prophecy of the resurgence of Israel is to be found encoded in the prophecies of Daniel where Josephus evades an interpretation of the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands" because it was believed to be a prophecy of the eventual overthrow of Rome (see *Antiquities* 10:210).

10. Daube, "Typology," 26, 32.

11. This discrepancy has been noted by Marcus, *Josephus*, 6:228; also Daube, "Typology," 26. Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of the temple in several passages (chapters 7, 26), but the mention of the temple in this particular speech is best interpreted as a deliberate retrojection by Josephus.

12. Marcus, *Josephus*, 6:247 note e; Daube, "Typology," 27.

13. See Daube, "Typology," 27.

14. See the note by Marcus, *Josephus*, 6:200–201 note c. Marcus says, "Josephus naturally thought of the book of Lamentations (which, like his contemporaries, he regarded as Jeremiah's work) as a prophecy of the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans as well as of that by the Babylonians." Marcus never explains his rationale here. Perhaps he has in mind the similarities of detail found in Lamentations about the Babylonian siege and Josephus's description of the Roman siege, capture, and burning of the city, or the details of the famine in Lamentations 4:4–5, 9–10, resulting in mothers eating their children as described by Josephus in A.D. 70 (*Jewish War* 6.201–19). Perhaps he is thinking about the Jewish tradition that both temples were destroyed on the ninth of Ab.

15. See Jerome, *Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah* 16:16–18, in *(S) Hieronymi Presbyteri in Hieremiam Prophetam Libri Sex*, ed. Siegfried Reiter (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1969), 158–59.

16. See William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 478–79.

17. Similar interpretations have been made of the biblical passage in Deuteronomy 28:47–57, which refers to siege, capture, and cannibalism. Some interpreters have seen Rome in the image of the nation “as swift as the eagle flieth”—the eagle being a prominent symbol in the Roman standards.