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AN INTERPRETIVE SURVEY: AUDIENCE REACTION QUOTATIONS IN JEREMIAH

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A striking feature of the Jeremiah material is the inclusion of numerous quotations attributed to the prophet's audience. A survey of these materials shows that these quotations, whether verbatim or "constructed" to reflect truthfully the collective expressions and sentiments of the audience, occur in four contexts: (1) accusation, (2) announcement, (3) personal confrontation, and (4) invitation. Study of these contexts demonstrates the degree and longevity of opposition to the prophet's ministry. The audience is depicted as overtly emphasizing Zion's inviolability and as unduly attached to externals (ark, temple, Law, king, etc.). Quotations of audience reaction in Jeremiah articulate the theological divergency of his audience. In every age the audience speaks its mind, declaring its theological tenets. Jeremiah knew what his audience said and spoke directly to the issues. Similarly the contemporary church must know and speak God's Word. The question is: What is the audience declaring today?

* * *

IN an earlier article this writer studied Jeremiah's employment of seemingly direct quotations of pseudoprophets.[1] In the process of that study, it also became apparent that the text of the book contained an even higher number of quotations, originating with the prophet's audience. These quotations serve as a major element in the audience reaction to Jeremiah's ministry. Overholt has recently estimated the number of such quotations to be "approximately 100 . . .

[1]R. E. Manahan, "A Theology of Pseudoprophets: A Study in Jeremiah," *GTJ* 1 (1980) 77-96.

distributed fairly evenly throughout the book."[2] So common a literary feature is deserving of serious study.[3]

What legitimate expectations might there be for such a study? One matter is certain: placing side by side the contrasting words of Jeremiah and his audience helps to clarify what theological issues were at stake in his era of history.[4] Such knowledge helps to sensitize and elucidate nuances of meaning in the Jeremiah material that otherwise might have been unnoticed. This background information itself proves helpful for further study of the book.

Further, such study helps to identify what theological deviations led to the apostasy of Judah in her waning years.[5] The audience spoke its mind, and what it said articulated its beliefs. Collation of these findings ought to furnish materials for understanding the essential tenets of popular theology. If this alone were the yield of this analysis, it would prove a worthwhile endeavor. Moreover, one may

[2]T. W. Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" *CBQ* 41 (1979) 262. While from this writer's study Overholt's number appears to be a fair approximation, he nowhere cites the 100 or so references, nor does he indicate his definition of a quotation. Such a definition is necessary for the isolation and identification of quoted material.

[3]Even recent studies in other areas of research are indicating what valuable contributions can be made by analyzing audience reaction. In particular note J.-P. Van Noppen ("A Method for the Evaluation of Recipient Response," *BT* 30 [1979] 301ff.) and a new work to be published by T. E. Gregory (*Vox Populi* [Columbus: Ohio State University, n.d.]). This latter work will maintain that it was not until the beginning of the present century that, largely as a result of the influence of Marxist thought, historians began to pay serious attention to the role of the crowd in antiquity.

[4]This point is maintained (though from a radically different perspective) in another context by R. Davidson ("Orthodoxy and the Prophetic Word," *VT* 14 [1964] 408). He understands that an adequate exploration of the relationship between Yahweh's word and the religious orthodoxy (for this writer, apostasy) of the day demands fulfillment of two conditions: "1) There must be a prophet locked in conflict with the religious establishment and providing us with sufficient information to sketch clearly the major issues at stake. 2) We must have access to the orthodox standpoint independent of that provided by the prophetic criticism."

[5]That apostasy is the issue is indicated by Jeremiah's use of מְשׁוּבָה, meaning "faithlessness, defection, apostasy"; cf. W. L. Holladay (ed.), *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 218. Of the dozen occurrences of this term in the OT Jeremiah uses the term in 2:19; 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 22; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7. Of these usages, a recurring phrase is מְשֻׁבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל (NASB, "faithless Israel"; cf. 3:6, 8, 11, 12). This phrasing would indicate that rather early in his ministry Jeremiah understood the nature of the audience's theological and experiential deviation. This, of course, is understood on the assumption that the section Jeremiah 1-20 generally represents the period of Josiah's reign; cf. L. J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 339, who follows the lead of E. J. Young (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 225-29). For an alternate viewpoint note R. K. Harrison (*Jeremiah and Lamentations* [Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1972] 33).

assume achievement of the above expectations to aid in understanding something of the very nature and method of theological deviation in any age. And just here the applicational nature of this study rests. What Jeremiah sensed and reacted to serves as forewarning that contemporary audience reaction may articulate its own popular theology, a theology out of sorts with historic orthodoxy.

But these expectations require at least a sense of the nature of the political environs of Jeremiah's age. His age was a political hurricane, enfolding in its swirl nations of less might and scattering political debris in unexpected ways. Judah found itself in the midst of the storm, political uncertainties all around. Jeremiah's book records the protracted agony of Judah's political fate. All this political agitation and uncertainty left its mark on the response of Jeremiah's hearers.[6]

The scope of this study prohibits any treatment of textual problems in the book of Jeremiah, unless they raise an interpretive question in relevant materials. There exist a number of more extensive treatments of textual matters relating to the book.[7] Yet, the assumption is that the text must be taken seriously.[8] When citing the English translation of the text, the NASB will be used unless otherwise noted.

METHODOLOGY FOR THIS STUDY

Definitions

An immediate concern of methodology is first to define important terms. In this study that must include a definition of "quotation" and "audience reaction."

[6]For a helpful summation of the political crisis note W. C. Klein ("Commentary on Jeremiah," *ATR* 45 [1963] 122). For an excellent treatment of the correlation between theological conceptions and the state of Judah note C. E. Tilson ("False Prophets in the Old Testament" [Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1951], especially pages 303ff.).

[7]Note especially J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965); and J. G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (HSM 6; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973). There are recent articles such as that of E. Tov ("Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX of Jeremiah 27 (34)," *ZAW* 91 [1979] 73-93).

[8]Of course, the underlying assumption of this paper is that the *corpus* of material that has come down to the contemporary world is the context for this investigation. The effort of this study is not to discuss the matter of the multitude of explanations for how this book came to be. Harrison (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 27) comments: "It is now increasingly realized that the extant writings of the prophets actually comprise anthologies of their utterances, and the book of Jeremiah is no exception to this general principle." Such being the case the text of Jeremiah has been searched time and again for clues as to possible sources for the material. Beginning with Duhm and

Quotation. Robert Gordis some time ago noted the difficulty in identifying quotations in the biblical record. Quite simply, "These quotations are naturally not indicated by a system of punctuation, which did not exist in ancient times, and often they may lack an introductory verb of speaking or thinking."[9] The reader of the biblical record must supply quotation marks where the sense demands hem. This, of course, demands careful attention to the sense of the passage and its intended structure within its context.[10] Attendant to this rather complex task is the sobering matter of knowing if a given quotation is a verbatim citation of a speaker's actual words or the hearer's verbalization of the speaker's thought. Here again the surrounding of a text serves as the best guide for determining the nature of the *quoted* material.

Given these problems in identifying quotations, the reader must develop a definition of a quotation that will serve well in isolating quoted materials. Gordis suggests that a "quotation" refers to "words which do not reflect the present sentiments of the author of the literary composition in which they are found, but have been introduced by the author to convey the standpoint of another person or situation."[11] He understands this definition to include both actual words and thoughts of the speaker. Generally, his definition is workable.

But in the case of Jeremiah's book there is considerable textual help in aiding this broad definition. The book possesses numerous verbatim citations of speakers or verbalizations consistent with their thought. Such an abundance of material helps the interpreter more easily check his identification of a given quotation against numerous other instances in the same body of literature.

Another feature of the book is its insistence on clarifying the views of the audience. The book repeatedly articulates from Yahweh's perspective the pulse of audience thought and life. This helps one know what to *expect* the audience to say. This sensitizing to the theological tension between Jeremiah and his audience enables the

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Mowinckel, attempts have followed (cf. ibid., 27-34 for an adequate survey of more recent discussion on the authorship of the book). Note the casual way in which W. J. Horwitz ("Audience Reaction to Jeremiah," *CBQ* 32 [1970] 555) begins his article: "It is generally recognized that three major sources, designated A, B, and C, have preserved material from the prophet Jeremiah or concerning him."

[9]R. Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1971) 108-9. Cf. also Gordis, *The Book of God and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965) 169ff.

[10]Ibid., 109: "That the passage is indeed a quotation must be understood by the reader, who is called upon in Semitic literature to supply not only punctuation but vocalization as well."

[11]Ibid.

contemporary reader to know where in the reading of the book a quotation is more likely to occur (as an example, 3:22-25). To reiterate, a quotation must be identified by a careful reading of the text, watching for textual indicators of quoted material. The reader of the book is aided by overt statements interpreting the nature of Jeremiah's hearers. This helps the reader know what content to expect in a quotation.

However, it is not always possible to determine if the quotation of the audience is intended to be a verbatim citation or a paraphrase of the speaker's thought. In fact, as Overholt points out, H. W. Wolff in his *Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch* observed "that quotations in the prophetic literature are *usually* attributed to groups of opponents, and are sometimes strange enough (e.g., the quotation of future words) to suggest that they are homiletical devices."[12] The attributing of a quotation to a group must be a rhetorical device in which the prophet constructs a "composite quotation" that truthfully represents the expressions of the audience.

A definition of "quotation" must include breadth enough for inclusion of both the author's direct citation of a speaker and construction of a "composite quotation" to reflect truthfully the collective expressions and sentiments of the audience. Above all, the definition must be accompanied by a rejection of any type of historicism that claims to identify infallibly all quotations, or finds quotations where context argues against, or in this case, finds quotations that argue against the interpretation of the audience given elsewhere in the book.[13]

Audience reaction. A definition of *audience reaction* is also necessary. Our present study understands that *audience* includes Jeremiah's contemporary countrymen and *reaction* further restricts the contemporary countrymen to those whose views counter Yahweh's as expressed through the prophet. This audience includes those who hold generally to the same theological perspective that might be termed a popular theology.

[12]Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 263.

[13]By historicism is meant the process by which the text of Scripture is made to submit to the unyielding demands of a modern scientific historiography which fails or refuses to articulate its underlying presuppositions. Two examples of such tendencies toward wresting the Biblical text are ibid., 108ff. (who hopes to find those verses, formerly thought incongruous, that may now be found congruous when understood as quotations) and Horwitz, "Audience Reaction to Jeremiah," 555-64. As evidence of his methodology Gordis cites direct quotations of speech by the subject, development of dialogue, direct quotations of the thoughts of the subject, prayers, quotations embodying the previous standpoint of thought of the speaker (which he may now have surrendered), citation of a hypothetical speech or thought, proverbial quotations, use of proverbial quotations as a text, contrasting proverbs, etc.

By this definition are excluded those instances where Jeremiah cites words that come from days other than his own.[14] Also excluded are quotations of foreign peoples.[15] Generally, these are of value in merely confirming the nuances of audience ideas expressed elsewhere. Further, this definition excludes quotations of those contemporary countrymen who may have taken Jeremiah's view or at least have been sympathetic to it.[16] In addition to these exclusions is the quotation given in 10:19-20, where the speaker is the land personified.[17] Moreover, those quotations where the prophet verbalizes on behalf of the nation are not included, since the views of the nation and the prophet are not concentric (cf. 4:10; 14:7-9, 13, 19-22).

[14]This means exclusion of those quotations recorded in 31:7, 18-19, 23, 29, 34. There is little doubt that the context of chap. 31 is future blessing for Yahweh's renewed people; cf. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, 135. V 7 mirrors a sharp contrast to the nation's comments in the days of Jeremiah (note for example 2:20; 6:16, 17; 22:21). And just so is the sentiment of 31:18-19. Also contrastive to what people of the exilic period must have uttered is the statement of 3:29 (ibid., 137). Exilic peoples "felt that God was judging them unjustly for circumstances which were no fault of theirs." Added to this cluster of verses in chap. 31 are several other references that refer to the future. The passage in 3:16 indicates that one day the people will no longer say, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord," because in that day their concern will be over Yahweh's divine presence rather than the symbol of it (note ibid., 66). However, this passage may have had a polemic use for Jeremiah's audience. Two passages, 16:14-15 and 23:7-8, substantially repeating each other, point out that, though God will cast his people into a foreign land (16:13) that is not the final end. Eventually once restored to the land they will have been furnished a more glorious substratum for the oath by Yahweh's name; cf. C. W. E. Naegelsbach, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah* (Lange's Commentaries; New York: Scribner's, 1915) 159 and 209. The passage in 23:7-8 is the more difficult, made so by its omission between vv 6 and 8 and its inclusion at the end of the chapter in the LXX. On the whole, given the context of both passages, the altered substratum of the oath refers to the coming restoration of Yahweh's people.

[15]Quotations of this sort are those in 6:4; 12:16 (cf. 12:14); 39:12; 40:2-5; 46:8, 14, 16, 17; 48:2, 3, 14, 17, 19; 49:4, 29; 50:7, 46.

[16]An illustration of this type of quotation is that of 45:3 which recounts an utterance of Baruch whom T. W. Davies ("Baruch," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939], 1. 407) describes as the devoted friend and faithful attendant of the prophet Jeremiah. Also add to this passage the citations of the conversation of Elishama, Delaish, Elnathan, Gemariah, Zedekiah, and all the other officials (note 36:12) with Baruch. The quotations occur in 36:14, 15, 16, 17, 19. The context indicates these officials (at least the first three named above) were more kindly disposed to Baruch (and thus Jeremiah); cf. 36:25. Jer 36:24 does indicate that "the king and all his servants (וְכָל־עֲבָדָיו) who heard these words were not afraid, nor did they rend their garments." At first reading, this comment might include the individuals named above. But they are referred to as "officials"(שָׂרִים). The term "servants" would include still others who attended the king. Therefore, the comment of v 24 must be understood to exclude these officials. For a similar conclusion compare Naegelsbach (*The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 315): "By the servants of the king who 'heard all these words,' are here evidently to be understood those whose who heard them here for the first time, not those who had already heard them in the

Methodological approach

The chief concern here is with the method of collation to be used as one sifts through the quotations that can now be isolated by observing the above definitions. Of course, not every interpreter has suggested the same methodology.

Several alternatives. One could take Horwitz's suggestion that the method of collation for organizing these quotations is threefold.[18] There are replies in which the audience repeats Jeremiah's statements. Again, there are replies induced by Jeremiah's words. And again, there are quotations made by Jeremiah (or God) of retorts the audience had made. These three have much to commend themselves. Certainly it is possible to collate the quotations about such centers. However, the weakness remains that this method tends to focus on the context of the quotation especially, not specifically on what the quotation tells about the audience; to know of the audience is important. The method does not appear broad enough to analyze adequately the quotations of audience reactions.

An alternative is Crenshaw's suggested methodology of collation. For him, the organizational schema must denote what one might call the theological tenets of the audience. Thus, he concludes that there are six such tenets:

> . . . (1) confidence in God's faithfulness, (2) satisfaction with traditional religion, (3) defiance in the face of prophets who hold a different

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secretary's office." Probably another quotation could be added to this category, 38:9, a citation of Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian eunuch. Though little is known of this individual, the citation does picture him as sympathetic to Jeremiah's needs; compare "Ebed-Melech," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), 2. 890. Additionally there are the quotations of Gedaliah (40:9-10, 16), whom the biblical record treats in kindly fashion, and probably the ten of eighty men (41:8; cf. 41:5). And, though the nature of their religious correspondence to the viewpoint of Jeremiah cannot be known exactly (cf. 26:21), the citations in 26:16, 18-19 indicate that a number of people came to the defense of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the judgment to fall on Jerusalem.

[17]Of this passage Naegelsbach (*The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 123) says: "That both these verses are the words of the country personified, is seen from 'my children,' etc., in ver. 20, for neither the prophet says this, nor the people, who are identical with the children and not forsaken, but forsaking.—*And I say.* In these words also we have a proof that the land is the speaker. For the words express no consciousness of guilt, but a comfort, which the innocent land alone could find, in the fact that a calamity is laid upon it, which must be borne." An interesting comparison with this passage is Jer 4:28.

[18]Horwitz, "Audience Reaction To Jeremiah," 559. One of his hopes by this method is to help establish, as Overholt ("Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 262) says, "the historicity of the prophet's message of the inevitable destruction of the nation."

> view, (4) despair when hope seems dead, (5) doubt as to the justice of God, and (6) historical pragmatism.[19]

Whereas Horwitz's method tends to isolate the settings of the quotations, Crenshaw's isolates the theological implications of the quotations themselves. But the latter lost something valuable, measuring a given quotation by its setting. It might yield insight for why the quotation was included at any given point in the text.

There are yet other alternative methods of collation. Overholt summarizes the three centers about which Wolff believed quotations could be collected:

> . . . those expressing faithfully the opinions of the persons quoted, those transforming these opinions by means of exaggeration and irony, and words spoken in the future.[20]

Then Overholt suggests his own method: examine "the form and rhetoric of the passages in which the quotations occur in an effort to describe where and how they are used in the prophet's speech."[21] For him, this methodology will aid in the discussion of the functions of these quotations in the message of Jeremiah.

[19]J. L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict* (BZAW 124; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1971) 24ff. A. S. Van der Woude ("Micah In Dispute With the Pseudo-Prophets," *VT* 19 [1969] 246) maintains that the theological tenets of "Zion-theology" which characterized the audience can be known through a study of disputations between canonical prophets and pseudoprophets.

[20]Note Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 263. About these citations of the audience C. Westermann (*Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967] 59-61) points out that Wolff's investigation (*Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch*) "of the citation in the prophetic speech, i.e., of the words of other men which are cited by the prophets, confirms . . . that the prophetic speech forms a unity consisting of an announcement and its reason: 'Yahweh's word and deed are not arbitrary. At the outset a reason for the coming judgment is indicated by the prefatory disclosure of guilt which also takes place in the citation. . . . The citation is necessary because an altercation is demanded by the dispute between God and man. The speech that only gives an imperative about the future and does not contain an altercation with the hearer is thus actually unprophetic. . . . The citation is subject to the freedom of the prophetic proclamation. It is the instrument of his public speech. . . . Because of this it is impossible to make a strict distinction between authentic and inauthentic (i.e., composed by the prophet) citations. The citation does not belong to the realm of the "private experiences." Either the prophet has heard it in the street like other people, or . . . he has formulated the citation on the basis of his knowledge of the heart of the people. . . . The lawsuit procedure is the stylistic background of the prophetic citation. . . . With the citation, it is as though the prophet allows the accused to accuse themselves. . . . The regular place in the prophetic speech where the citation frequently recurs is in the reason for the judgment. It is the clearest form of the reason.'"

[21]Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 264.

A proposal. The above summation of possible methodologies for interpreting audience response quotations indicates the need for a method that is able to deal with the "where" and the "what" of these citations. The method must describe where the citation is found, that is, concern itself with the context of the quotation. Jeremiah used citations, but in what contextual settings? Additionally, the method must focus attention on the "what," the actual content of the quotation. The question is: What does that content tell us of the religious ideas of Jeremiah's audience? This content sensitizes one to the central point(s) of tension between Jeremiah and his audience.

In the following discussion, attention will be given to the context in which these citations occur. The contexts vary and the location of the quotation within a given type of context varies. But always at the front is the sharp contrast between the prophet and his audience (the "how" of Jeremiah's method).

CONTEXTUAL SETTING OF QUOTATIONS

As the process of collecting quotations about various contextual centers begins, the interpreter must not overlook the danger of forcing disparate passages into the same category of context.[22] However, where there is similarity of context, collating the various citations may be very helpful in understanding the uses to which these are put in the Jeremiah material. Centers of context about which these citations circulate seem to be four in number, three of which have large and nearly equal numbers of citations attached. These four are: Accusation, Announcement, Personal Confrontation, and Invitation. A fairly even distribution of these quotations exists throughout the book, ranging from chaps. 2 through 51.

Accusation

The study begins here simply because quotations in an accusation setting are principally found in the first half of the book.[23] By accusation is meant those passages which record the prophet's pressing home Yahweh's case against the audience. The burden of the case, though having multiple features, has but one purpose: to substantiate the charge of not complying with Yahweh's expectations.[24] The use of

[22]Note a similar warning concerning the same forcing of the whole of prophetic speech patterns into a few categories in Westermann (*Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 56-57).

[23]The locations of quotations in the context of accusation are: 2:6, 8, 20, 23, 25, 27 (all 3), 31, 35 (first one in the verse); 5:2, 12-13, 19, 24; 6:14, 16, 17; 7:10; 8:6, 8, 11; 13:22; 16:10; 18:12; 22:14, 21; 23:17 (both), 25; 27:9, 14, 16.

[24]Overholt ("Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 264) follows the direction of K. Koch (*The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*), in understanding

quotations within this nucleus is three-fold: (1) quotations used as confirmation of the accusation, (2) quotations used as contrast to the accusation, and (3) quotations used as introduction to the accusation. But whatever placement a given quotation has within the accusation, the nuclear idea is present: Israel's failure to comply with Yahweh's expectations.[25] A survey of this three-fold usage follows.

Quotation as confirmation. Those passages where citations of this sort occur use the quotation as evidence to substantiate the accusation. From study of these passages, there appears a complex of seven distinct accusations in which quotations confirm the charge. In 2:6, as well as 2:31, the accusation of (1) ingratitude is brought against the audience. The first reference concerns what they did not say. The rhetorical question of v 5 introduces the citation.[26] Vv 5 and 6 together indicate that Yahweh faithfully provided for them through effective leadership. The expected reciprocation from Israel was to seek the very God who had so abundantly provided.[27] But that was what Israel had not done. They did not ask after him, implying that he had been forgotten. The second of these two references (2:31) also suggests the same element of ingratitude. The rhetorical questions

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accusation as focusing on the relationship between Yahweh and the audience and as describing "a social, political, or religious situation that requires 'remedy and intervention by Yahweh.'" For further discussion of accusation note Westermann (*Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 142ff.).

[25]Typically accusation has been considered a part of the judgment speech. However, G. W. Ramsey ("Speech-Forms in Hebrew Law and Prophetic Oracles," *JBL* 96 [1977] 45-58) has argued that judgment speeches must be distinguished in form from complaint speeches which contain accusation but no "emphasis on forthcoming punishment" announcement. Ramsey also points out that as Yahweh presses his lawsuit against Israel, he acts "in accord with what is expected of a just suzerain" (ibid., 57). The whole matter of the lawsuit as brought by the suzerain has gained considerable attention in the last two decades. For a recent discussion of this lawsuit (ריב) pattern cf. M. Weinfeld, "Ancient Near Eastern Patterns in Prophetic Literature," *VT* 27 (1977) 187ff. Further selected information on this matter and the whole issue of patterns from the Ancient Near East and their attendant contributions for understanding Old Testament prophecy: J. Craghn, "Mari and Its Prophets: The Contributions of Mari to the Understanding of Biblical Prophecy," *BTB* 5 (1975) 32-55; J. Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel," *HTR* 63 (1970) 29-51; H. B. Huffmon "Prophecy in the Mari Letters," *BA* 31 (1968) 101-24; Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 68 (1959) 285-95; W. Moran, "New Evidence From Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Bib* 50 (1969) 15-56; J. F. Ross, "Prophecy in Hamath, Israel, and Mari," *HTR* 63 (1970) 1-28; S. D. Walters, "Prophecy in Mari and Israel," *JBL* 89 (1970) 78-91.

[26]Note W. A. Bruggeman, "Jeremiah's Use of Rhetorical Questions," *JBL* 92 (1973) 358-74.

[27]Compare Laetsch, *Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah*, 36 and Naegelsbach, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 31.

imply that Yahweh had not been a wilderness or a land of thick darkness.[28] Yet, Israel spurned his leadership, choosing instead to roam at her pleasure.

Quotations as confirmation are also used when an accusation is made of (2) defiling the land (2:8). Taken together, vv 7 and 8 indicate the religious leadership's failure to handle the law aright, because they did not know Yahweh. Thus they never asked, "Where is the Lord?" They did not seek his mouth (cf. Lev 10:11). The reproach of their failure (as teachers of the Law to seek from Yahweh's mouth) fell upon the land (2:7).

A third accusation is that of (3) defection. These quotations are found in 2:20, 25, 27; 5:24; and 8:6.[29] The composite picture of these citations is rebellion and overthrow. Israel's own words turn back on them as *evidence* of rebellion, the very accusation of Yahweh. Listen to their confirmatory words: "I will not serve" (2:20); "It is hopeless! No! For I have loved strangers, and after them I will walk" (2:25); "You are my father" (spoken to a tree, 2:27); "You gave me birth" (spoken to a stone, 2:27); "Arise and save us" (when all else fails, call upon Yahweh, 2:27); "Let us now fear the Lord our God, who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain, who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest" (this they did not say in their heart, 5:24); "What have I done?" (no man asked in repentance, 8:6).[30]

A further use of quotation as confirmation is in the prophet's accusation of (4) lying (5:12-13). The implication of these words is that the people called lie the dire predictions of destruction uttered by true prophets. "Not He; misfortune will not come on us," says the audience. But Yahweh had not lied to them. They assumed too much! Two more uses of quotations as confirmation occur as the audience is accused of (5) folly (22:14; in this case Jehoiakim's folly) and (6) continuing obstinance (22:21; here the citation confirms their continuing habit of refusal).

A final use of quotations to confirm an accusation is in the case of false prophets who are accused of (7) falsification (6:14; 8:11; 23:17)

[28]On the term here translated "thick darkness" (מַאְפֵּלִיָּה) cf. BDB, 66; and H. Freedman, *Jeremiah* (Soncino Books of the Bible; London: Soncino, 1949) 16 for brief discussions of this term.

[29]This interpretation of 2:20 understands the verse to be read as NIV has it: "Long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off you bonds . . ."; for commentary and discussion on the pointing consult Naegelsbach, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 27 (textual and grammatical n. 1) and Laetsch, *Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah*, 40 (Grammatical Notes).

[30]That this latter reference is in the context of defection is made clear by the previous context.

[both]; 23:25; 27:9; 27:14; 27:16; 37:19).[31] A cursory reading of these quotations confirms the accusation of falsification. These prophets declared that the audience *could* expect peace, that calamity would *not* come, that service under the enemy would *not* happen, and that even the absence of the temple vessels was of short duration. Alas, all was believable because the false prophets claimed, "I had a dream!" They had not stood in Yahweh's council and their predictions thus were false.[32] The accusation of falsification is confirmed by the words these prophets spoke. None of what they spoke would happen.

Quotation as contrast. This usage (and the one to follow) is far less frequent in the accusation sections of the Jeremiah material. In this case the quotation is understood as a contrast to the accusation. Through use of this contrast the precise point of the accusation is sharpened and heightened. Four accusations are made in which the citation stands as a contrast.

There is the accusation of (1) guilt (2:23; 2:35). In 2:23 the audience reaction is that of innocence, but the accusation which continues in vv 24ff. corrects her false claim. No wonder the rhetorical question of 2:23 begins with, "How can you say . . . ?" The passage in 2:35 suggests that the audience continues insisting (imperfect) on their innocence, this in spite of their open, brazen sin (v 34). A further usage is in an accusation of (2) swearing falsely (5:2). The quotation indicates their readiness to make use of the most binding oath of all and in that very instance, therefore (לָכֵן), swear falsely (שֶׁקֶר).[33] Moreover, a quotation as a contrast to an accusation of (3) ignorance of sin's consequence is used in 7:10 and of (4) ignorance of Yahweh's law in 8:8. In both cases the assumption of the audience is a stark contrast to the accusation. They reason that sin has no consequence; thus, "we are delivered." The law's presence means "we are wise." Their problem was that, while the law was present, they did not know the ordinance of Yahweh (8:7). Thus the rhetorical question of v 8, "How can you say . . . ?" Finally in 6:16 and 17 the quotation is used as evidence of (5) rejecting invitations offered.

Quotation as introduction. In this case, the quotation is used to initiate the accusation against the audience (5:19; 13:22; 16:10; 18:12).

[31]For a more complete interpretation of these false prophets note R. E. Manahan, "A Theology of Pseudoprophets: A Study in Jeremiah," *GTJ* 1 (1980) 79-81.

[32]On this entire concept of falsehood in Jeremiah note T. W. Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood* (Naperville: Allenson, 1970).

[33]Compare Naegelsbach, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 69 for comments which reach the same conclusion. So Freedman (*Jeremiah*, 34) concludes: "Their oaths are false, even when supported by the most solemn mention of God's name."

The first three are cast in question form. Each raises the question of what the basis for judgment is. The question introduces a rather detailed accusation. In 18:12 a statement of the audience's insistence on following their own course introduces the accusation of vv 13ff.[34]

Announcement

The burden of announcement is judgment and is the expected corollary to accusation. By announcement is meant that oracle of disaster sure to follow heavy on the heels of failure to comply with Yahweh's expectations.[35] While attention might be given to the recipient of the announcement (an individual or the nation) or to the content of the announcement (death, dispossession from the land, etc.), study might also be given to location within the announcement oracle. The several quotations within announcement oracles fall into two categories of location.[36] These citations appear to be used either to introduce the announcement or in some cases add an expansion to the announcement. A survey of these locations follows.

Quotation as introduction. Thirteen quotations seem to be used to introduce the announcement. Four of these are constructed rhetorically as questions: 13:12; 15:2; 23:33; and 33:24. All of these lead to a more complete discussion of judgment. The third of these issues in an announcement which, from vv 34-38, continues circulating about the phrase first introduced in v 33: "The oracle of the Lord." However, the introductory quotation in v 33 is immediately followed by the bold announcement: "I shall abandon you." The quotation of v 33 indicates the derision of the audience as they ask what new heavy, burdensome (מַשָּׂא), not pleasing word had come from Yahweh.[37]

[34]In point of fact the quotation of 18:12 functions as a transition between invitation (end of v 11) and accusation in verse 13. The accusation builds on the quotation, "therefore" (לָכֵן, v 13).

[35]Overholt, "Jeremiah 2 and the Problem of 'Audience Reaction,'" 264. For a more detailed discussion of announcement in terms of its introduction, form, content, contrast motif, sign etc., see Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 149-61. For an interesting study on a tangential treatment of announcement cf. D. R. Hillers, "A Convention In Hebrew Literature: The Reaction to Bad News," *ZAW* 77 (1965) 86-92.

[36]This study understands that quotations within announcements are: 2:35 (the second of two); 4:5, 19-21, 31; 8:14-16a, 19, 20; 9:19; 13:12, 18; 15:2; 21:13; 22:18 (both); 23:33, 34, 35 (both), 38; 33:24; 34:5; 38:22; 42:13, 14; 44:25, 26; 51:34, 35 (both).

[37]The use of word emphasizes the derision the audience held for words of woe, not weal, from Yahweh. Of course, the word could simply mean "pronouncement" (cf. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 217), but the context suggests the term should be understood in the sense of burden. Of the passage Naegelsbach (*The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 217) comments: "At all events the opposers emphasized the idea of burden. They wished to say that every

The last of these four (33:24) has been somewhat difficult to interpret, but the understanding here is that the nation of Israel is speaking and that "this people" may refer to that skeptical portion of the audience. "My people" would then refer to the whole of the nation.[38] The skepticism concerns whether Yahweh has kept faithfully his promise in choosing Israel and Judah. The announcement which follows is not ultimately of destruction but of weal: "I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them." But upon the immediate audience it was an announcement of woe, since the weal will eventually *follow* a carrying off into captivity (שְׁבוּתָם).[39]

Besides these four references there is considerable variety in just what relationship the introductory quotation sustains to the crux of the announcement. The obstinacy evident in the citation in 44:25 brings on full force the prediction of judgment. In 2:35b the obstinate insistence of innocence brings on the prediction.

The passage in 29:15 uses an introductory quotation in a rather unusual way. A citation is made which indicates that members of the nation already in Babylon believed that true prophets were among them. These prophets could continue their predictions about Jerusalem so long as the city stood. But the announcement is that Jerusalem will not stand (vv 16-20). What then will those supposed prophets in Babylon prophesy about? They will be out of work![40]

In 51:34 and 35 (both) the citations lead to an announcement against Babylon. The speaker of these citations is Israel as she anguishes in her distress (the NIV punctuation is preferable). The citations of 22:18 indicate how lamentation over the passing of Jehoiakim will not be made. Silence over this sort of lament is

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declaration of Jehovah was only a new burden, that only what was burdensome, not what was pleasing, came from this God. In so far the question was one of blasphemous derision." There is also the matter of the LXX rendering of "What oracle" (or burden) by "You are the oracle" (v 33). This, however, does not alter the general interpretation of the passage.

[38]For further discussion of this point note ibid., 296 and Freedman, *Jeremiah*, 229.

[39]While there is some debate over the exact translation of the word שְׁבוּתָם (cf. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 358), the statement "I will restore" (אָשִׁוב, v 26) confirms the interpretation here offered. This latter form itself has been of some concern also (note apparatus).

[40]On this passage Naegelsbach (*The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 249) comments: "Hence also the prophecies of the false prophets dwelt above all on the continuance of Jerusalem. Even the present misfortune, the partial deportation of the people and the sacred vessels, although they had not predicted it, they could explain as a mere episode, which did not refute the main tenor of their promises, so long as Jerusalem and the temple were standing, and there were people in Jerusalem. Hence Jeremiah takes away the ground from under the feet of those false prophets, by predicting in vers. 16-20 the total destruction of the present population of Jerusalem, together with their king."

appropriate to the announcement that "he will be buried with a donkey's burial" (v 19). The quotation of 13:18 graphically introduces the announcement of the ruination of regal symbols due to exile.

Quotation as expansion. Among the seventeen quotations used to expand and amplify in some way the essence of the announcement of judgment are those which picture alarm, sorrow, anguish, and even despair on the part of those who will be judged. Alarm among the recipients of judgment is portrayed by the quotations in 4:5 and 8:14-16a. Sorrow, anguish, and despair are graphically depicted in expansions of the announcement in 4:19-21, 31; 8:19, 20; and 9:19.[41] The passages in 23:34, 35 (both), and 38 all in some way expand on the central idea of the audience's skeptical derision given in the introductory quotation in v 33. In a rather long announcement passage, the quotation of 21:13 functions as a means of identifying the audience as those who securely rest in their supposed invulnerability. However, Zedekiah, the king, is promised a humanitarian end, and the quotation serves as an expansion on that theme in 34:5.

The occurrence in 44:26 is a bit unexpected in the way the citation is employed to expand on the announcement. The quotation suggests that the oath will not be practiced (even falsely) because of the decimation of those men of Judah presently in Egypt (44:27). By citing what those men will not say, the quotation is intended to expand on the announcement: "All the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt will meet their end by the sword and by famine until they are completely gone" (44:27).

Last, there are three quotations in 38:22 and 42:13, 14 which, for purposes of this survey, may conveniently be grouped together. All three are in the context of a conditional construction.[42] In all three cases the audience faced a decision: What should we do about leaving? In these cases the quotations in their respective ways expand on the announcement of judgment.

Personal confrontation

The emphasis here falls on *personal.* These quotations are centered in passages where Jeremiah as prophet is pitted against opposition (of varying degrees). A number of quotations suggest (1) great

[41]This interpretation of 8:19 is contested by Bruggemann, "Jeremiah's Use of Rhetorical Questions," 362) who understands the rhetorical question to create "an entry for the accusation which asserts that the issue is not Yahweh's presence but Israel's lack of loyalty." The interpretation suggested in this study is that v 18 (note alternate translations of initial words) introduces the announcement that moves through v 22.

[42]The construction is "if (אִם, 38:21 and 42:13) . . . participle . . ., then (וְ 38:22 and 42:15) . . ." Note GKC, 494-97. The first of these quotations (38:22) is placed in the

personal threats against Jeremiah. These locations are 11:19, 21; 12:4; 18:18; 20:10 (both); 26:8-9, 11; 29:26-28; 37:13; and 38:4.[43] Taken together, these quotations testify to the breadth, length, and depth of opposition to Jeremiah. That citizens from his hometown, the nation at large, friends, priests, false prophets, political officials, and even an exile all opposed him demonstrates the breadth of opposition. The length of that ill-feeling persisted throughout most of the prophet's ministry. And the depth of that ill-feeling is seen very plainly in reading the above references; they wanted his death.

Beyond this there are a number of (2) personal encounters with individuals. Most preeminently the encounters are with Zedekiah. The citations of this sort are 21:2; 32:3-5; 37:3, 9, 17, 19; 38:10, 14, 16, 19, and 24-26. In general terms, the portrait given of Zedekiah is of a man caught in all the turmoil of the age, caught with a faltering kingdom on his hands. Additionally, four quotations are given of Johanan, 40:14; 42:2-3, 5-6; and 43:2-3. In the mouth of Jehoiakim are put the words of one quotation (36:29; a quotation within a quotation), and in the mouth of Ishmael one quotation (41:6). The passages in 44:16-18 and 19 concern an encounter Jeremiah had with a group of men and women (note the message against which they reacted, 44:1-14). A last personal encounter in which a quotation is placed is that of Hananiah and Jeremiah in chap. 28.[44] Vv 2-4 recount the words of Hananiah. Clearly these words could have been grouped earlier with statements about false prophets, but considering the nature of the head-on confrontation of chap. 28, they belong in this category.

On three occasions, there are quotations in the context of (3) the prophet's seeming conflict with the ways of Yahweh (14:13, 15, and 17:15). The first two alternate between Jeremiah's attempted excuse for the people (false prophets are misleading them) and Yahweh's answer (he did not send those prophets to say what they had declared). Jeremiah's other conflict in which a quotation occurs is his complaint that the audience derisively asks to know where the word of Yahweh is (17:15).

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apodosis, the last two quotations (42:13, 14) in the protasis. The construction itself suggests probability.

[43]On 20:10 note the interpretation offered by W. L. Holladay, "The Covenant With the Patriarchs Overturned: Jeremiah's Intention In 'Terror On Every Side,'" *JBL* 91 (1972) 305-20 and D. L. Christensen, "'Terror On Every Side' In Jeremiah," *JBL* 92 (1973) 498-502.

[44]For a study of this conflict note T. W. Overholt, "Jeremiah 27-29: The Question of False Prophecy," *JAAR* 35 (1967) 241-49.

Invitation

The materials within this last context of quoted material from the audience may be surveyed very briefly since the number of citations is few, three in fact. The first of these in 3:22b-25 appears to be a structured response from the audience at the invitation of Yahweh to return.[45] In the response, the audience is made to speak in words of repentance and sorrow over sins committed. Here provision is made for the audience to have an appropriate response, unfortunately, a response she never made. In 4:2, the quotation appears in the protasis of a conditional statement as one of the conditions to be met for those who truly return. They are to swear in truth and righteousness, not falsely. The "Temple Sermon" in chap. seven contains a quotation within the invitation with which the passage begins. They had falsely trusted in objects and externals. Those who amend their ways will be blessed with Yahweh's special presence in their midst.

This survey of the nearly one hundred quotations serves to indicate the context within which citations are made. The discussion now raises the question: What can be learned about the book's interpretation of the audience by studying the actual content of the quotations?

CONTENT OF THE QUOTATIONS

By now, certain ideas about the content of these numerous audience reaction quotations should be clear. Space does not permit any extensive treatment of each quotation. In fact, such would serve no particular purpose here. A general picture, however, of the audience begins to emerge from a survey of these quotations. The composite portrayal is telling and establishes some rather clear points of tension between the prophet and his audience. Other than the following could be said, but what follows must be said.[46]

Opposition to the prophet's theology

Jeremiah had consistently maintained throughout his ministry that breaking Yahweh's stipulations was the reason for coming judgment. In the previous analysis of quotations in accusation sections the study indicated the prophet's charges that met with stiff

[45]For an important interpretive note on 3:22ff. see Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation*, 116-17.

[46]In addition to the three items cited attention could be called to the types of sins the audience committed or the nature of false prophets or the type of response to Yahweh's blessings.

opposition. The audience claimed innocence in the face of such charges (cf. 2:35 and 8:6). As Jeremiah attempted to call them back, they went their own way, insisting on their self-direction (cf. 2:20, 31; 6:16; etc.). So serious was the conflict between prophet and audience that they mocked him and wished his death (cf. 17:15 and 11:19; 18:18; 26:8-9; etc.). And this opposition lasts from beginning to end, so intense was it (cf. all of chap. 2 and 44:16-18, 19). In the face of such hostility, the question can rightfully be raised: What audience ideas led them in such reaction? The content of these quotations does not leave one wanting for an answer.

Emphasis on Zion's inviolability

More than a dozen passages scattered throughout the book indicate that the notion of Jerusalem's security stood at the heart of audience belief. Jeremiah had given clear assurances that covenant obedience would assure Jerusalem's continuance, and disobedience its collapse.[47] He called the audience to obedience.[48] But they did not obey. They insisted on Jerusalem's continuance (note 6:14; 7:10; 8:11; 12:4; 21:13; 23:17; 27:9, 14 and 37:19). And even after the Babylonians had staged attacks, the audience (represented by Hananiah in 28:2-4) continued insisting that Jerusalem was inviolable. Of course, they had to make a few adjustments in their analysis! Within *two years* things would be better! The audience was even aware that Micah had predicted the plowing of Zion (26:18). But that did not matter; the audience believed Zion could not fall. But why did they take this view?

Two passages may suggest an answer. The passage in 33:24 is interesting. Earlier, the interpretation given this verse was that skeptical Israel speaks, saying: "The two families which the Lord chose, He has rejected them." The audience here places fault squarely on Yahweh's failure to execute his choosing of them. Their degradation prohibited an alternative explanation. Could it be that in their minds the rise or fall of Zion was solely dependent on Yahweh's selection of it? Many years earlier Isaiah had recorded an interesting passage in this light. Hayes points out that Isaiah watched "the menace of the Assyrian army: 'There cometh a smoke out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks (Is. 14:31b).'"[49] Only one answer can be

[47]Important passages here are 17:21-25; 22:8-9; 23:5-6; 25:29; 26:18-21; 29:11; 32:23ff.; 33:19ff.; 35:15; 52:1ff.

[48]Cf. 11:3ff. and so throughout the book.

[49] See J. H. Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Inviolability," *JBL* 82 (1963) 424-25. However, agreement cannot be found with Hayes' later conclusion that "the tradition of Zion's election, associated with the bringing of the ark to the city and the building of

given to messengers who came demanding the city's surrender: "That the Lord hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge" (Isa 14:32).

The second of two quotations in Jeremiah which may give a clue concerning why the audience concluded Zion could not fall is in 5:12-13. Here the words "Not He; misfortune will not come on us" are of note. The opening words "Not He" (NASB) are translated "He will do nothing" in NIV. The expression לֹא־הוּא implies that such activity as misfortune (רָעָה) is somehow not part of what Yahweh would do. The suggestion is that the character of their God rejected such activity. Taking 33:24 and 5:12-13 together may suggest that the audience understood Zion as inviolable because Yahweh's choosing of her caused him never to act against her. Such activity against her would be utter inconsistency (contrast the singular expression of 26:18).

Tilson in his study has grappled with this situation of the audience. He concludes that out of a "basically religious understanding of Yahweh's protection, there evolved a political theory that may be termed 'the divine right of Israel to chart Yahweh's course for him.'"[50] The audience must have come to see Yahweh's very existence as a guarantee of their success.[51] In summary, the audience reaction quotations in Jeremiah leave no doubt that the audience held tenaciously to Zion's inviolability as a central theological-political tenet.

Emphasis on externals

If Zion's continuance is not conditioned on covenantal obedience as Jeremiah declared, then what is the basis of its continuance? The audience understood Yahweh's selection as the basis. But how could the audience be assured of this selection?

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the temple, was connected with pre-Davidic or non-Israelite traditions concerning the invulnerability of Jerusalem" (ibid., 426). Cf. also the study of R. De Vaux, "Jerusalem and the Prophets," *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition* (edited by Harry Orlinsky; Library of Biblical Studies; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1969), 275-300.

[50]Tilson, "False Prophets In the Old Testament," 309. He continues: "Hard upon the heels of the belief that Yahweh was Palestine's special protector came the illogical, as well as irreligious and disastrous, deduction that he was its necessary protector. Simultaneous with the emergence of this solution to the religious-political puzzle, humble gratitude in the face of Yahweh's unspeakable grace began to give way to arrogant presumption upon his irrational prejudice."

[51]For Tilson such thinking on the part of the audience may be explained by the tendency of the audience to equate Yahweh's rule as coextensive with the landed area of Israel; he was a tribal god (ibid., 303ff.). For further study on this general subject note F. C. Fensham, "Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible," *TZ* 23 (1967) 305-22. Also note the attendant discussion of W. C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 152ff.

As part of the religious rationale, Jeremiah's audience considered externals to be evidence of this selection. Externals became necessary to legitimate this selection. Should the externals be taken away, the selection was invalidated. What were these externals?

Several quotations of the audience clarify at least certain of these externals. The citation in 3:16 is in the context of change which the people will undergo. The change will be that the ark's significance will be outshone by the presence of Yahweh.[52] That this contrast is picked to depict the change may indicate that the mention of the ark was polemical. This would be especially so if the ark had comprised one of the externals to which the audience had given their loyalties.[53]

In 7:4 little doubt is left that another of the externals was the presence of the temple. The audience must have concluded that the temple's presence was in some sense a guarantee of their blessing from Yahweh's hand. The presence of the Law may have been another external (8:8). In 8:19 the external seems to be the presence of the dynasty. If there is a king, good! Even the vessels had some external significance for the audience (27:16 and 28:3).[54] And, perhaps, even prophets (so long as some externals existed in Zion) could be external rationalizations (29:15, compare with 16-20). Externals became signs of Yahweh's selection of Zion and its continuance.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing survey, an attempt has been made to establish something of the context and content of audience reaction quotations in Jeremiah. The study has yielded several important points.

The point of theological tension between Jeremiah and his audience is rather clear. Whereas Jeremiah had insisted on conformity to covenantal stipulations, the audience had insisted on Zion's right to exist. The prophet insisted that Zion's collapse resulted from the audience's disobedience. The audience accused Jeremiah of lying because Zion was inviolable. Understanding this tension helps to interpret both the book and the man. Certain points of conflict were at stake. These become part of the milieu of Jeremiah.

Audience reaction indicates the several elements of theological divergency. It is a theology of presumption, one that is "para-covenantal" (Yahweh had chosen!). But it was one which substituted

[52]Cf. M. Weinfeld ("Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel," *ZAW* 88 [1976] 26ff.) for a discussion of this passage, especially his notations on its dating.

[53]For a study on the history of the presence of the ark note M. Haran, "The Disappearance of the Ark," *IEJ* 13 (1963) 46-58, but especially 51.

[54]Note the study of P. R. Ackroyd, "The Temple Vessels—A continuity theme," *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (SVT 22; Leiden: Brill, 1972) 166-81.

externals for covenantal obligation. This derangement insidiously kept the audience from perceiving clearly the realities of the Babylonian threat.

And this survey reminds that audience reaction now, as then, speaks its mind, declares its theological tenets. Jeremiah knew what the audience said and spoke directly to the issues at stake. Similarly the contemporary church must know and carefully speak God's Word as did Jeremiah. What is audience reaction saying today? And is the Word faithfully spoken?