

**A SHORT STUDY ON THE POSSIBLE
CLAIM TO OWNERSHIP
OF JEREMIAH
AS THE WRITER OF KINGS**

It is generally acknowledged that the Books of Kings surfaced in their present form at the time of the exile. Scholars cite a spray of names or unidentifiable authors who might have lived around this time and written the books-but why not Jeremiah who was active at the time when the loss of city and temple were acute experiences of his own? Besides that prophet was deeply devout and in touch with the LORD as over 200 recorded speeches of the Almighty to him within the prophecy of Jeremiah demonstrate.

Jeremiah made substantial records in his prophecy. Jeremiah had the tools of a writer and a personal secretary-cum-scribe, Baruch. Jeremiah was in contact with the early exiles and deeply concerned for their future and of all men at the time he was aware that after 70 years the LORD would bring back his own. It is both tradition and also common sense that Jeremiah is the best placed writer who might have claim to own these books.

The expression *“to this day”* is most frequently used by Jeremiah as I shall now show. But first I want to eliminate 4 uses which have to do with the Passover – one in Jeremiah’s own writing – Jeremiah 7.25

There are 4 distinct mentions of **the day of the writer** in the Books of Kings. They emerge in the simple expression “to this day” seen elsewhere in the OT. Let’s take them one by one:

1. 1k8.8 **Then they drew the staves out some length and the ends of the staves were observed from the holy place at the front of the oracle but they were not seen outside and they are there till this day.** *What is being conveyed is that the stave ends were apparent by two bulges in the curtain but they did not protrude physically through the curtain. This historical note suggests the temple was standing during at least some part of the writer’s life – affirming a writing date not later than the time of Jeremiah (8.8). Besides Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah and of the serving priests in his early ministry so he would have witnessed the stave end protrusions in the holy place during his ministry at the incense altar. This surely heightens his probable claim to be the writer.*
2. 2k17.34 **Unto this day they (the northern remnant who serve the gods of the Babylonian peoples that gained sovereignty in Samaria) fear not the LORD.** *This context gives further confirmation that the writing is subsequent to the carrying away of the northern tribes and exactly fits the time of Jeremiah’s ministry.*
3. 2k17.41 **So these nations feared the LORD and served their graven images- three generations of them until today.** *The writer has referred to four nations that made shrines and high places in the north following the early captivity and engaged in Moloch practices whilst being very wary of the LORD still they worshipped other gods along with the remnant in the north. They had an alternative priesthood to that with which Jeremiah would be associated (2K17.32). For a hundred years since the first siege of Samaria the north was*

under Babylonian influence and its capitol finally succumbed in 604BC –eight years before Jerusalem fell. This century when Samaria was solidly within the Babylonian sphere of influence is the period the writer of Kings is referring to.

4. 2k 21.15 **From the days your fathers came out of Egypt till this day.** *This reference is pertinent because it takes us to the days of Manasseh (697-642BC) the latter part of which reign falls well within the life-span of Jeremiah. Besides the writer goes on to speak of the rule of Amon and Josiah which takes us to the time of the Babylonian invasion of Syria that evented in an extensive campaign in 605 in Carchemish & Egypt and the carrying away of some from Judah like Daniel when Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar.*

To consolidate this argument from indirect evidence concerning the writer of the Books of Kings I refer you to the prophecy of Jeremiah itself where the Prophet demonstrates within his own writing that he is living in anxious days. These are days when the nation is under extreme pressure. I submit that his “unto his day” speaks of a time when there is still evidence obtainable from the temple and in the records though it is seen by him-Jeremiah-as the end of the monarchy and of an age. I refer you to the following contexts:-

Jeremiah 7.25, 25.18, 35.14, 36.2, 44.22 and 22.10

Outside of these contexts the expression “Unto this day” is used twice by Joshua 22.17 & 23.8 and twice in Judges 1.26 & 19.30 (which refers to the Passover); then three times in the Books of Samuel 1S 8.2 (Passover reference)& 30.25 with 2 S7.6 and only otherwise in Chronicles quite understandably (In 1 C 17.5[Passover reference] and 2C5.9). Of these 9 contexts 3 refer to events since the Passover and the earlier ones are regulative of the expression itself first used by Joshua. It cannot pass notice that the writer of Kings *alias* Jeremiah (by Jewish tradition – here commended) owns the lion-share of this usage and that he is writing of a particular day-a halcyon time of captivity exile and loss and yet one where the hallmarks of Jewish life still exist.