



Origen: Homilies on Jeremiah and I Kings 28 (Fathers of the Church Patristic Series)

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Souls existing before their bodies, witches summoning dead prophets from the underworld, the return of the damned and the Devil himself to God in the end, and many other theological speculations surprise the reader of Origen's *Homilies on Jeremiah and I Kings 28*. Some of these very theses of the third-century priest from Alexandria, Egypt, were condemned in the Second Council of Constantinople. But plumbing the mystical depths of the Prophecy of Jeremiah is the central point of the homilies.

Presented in this volume are the remains of twenty-two homilies and a collection of fragments delivered by Origen around A.D. 240. The original texts of the homilies on Jeremiah have not come down to us completely; two of the homilies survive only in a Latin translation of St. Jerome. The homily on I Kings 28, while not a part of the homilies on Jeremiah, deals with the Witch of Endor and has been added to this volume in virtue of its own inherent interest.

In this collection, Origen seeks understanding of the significance of the hostility of the Chosen People towards the Prophet Jeremiah before their captivity in Babylon. Origen in many ways identified with the great prophet and thought of Jeremiah as a type for Christ in the Hebrew Scriptures. Origen realized that Jeremiah came at a crucial time in the history of Israel, the time of captivity, and he views this event and the events around it as pregnant with meaning for the people of his time.

Watching a master grapple with admittedly difficult, obscure texts and give them compelling, forceful delivery must have impressed Origen's congregation. Readers will find it no less engaging to read his homilies now and experience some of that exhilaration of hearing a true expert highlight every subtlety of the pericope and make plain what once was obscure.

John Clark Smith studied religion, theology, and philosophy at Syracuse University, Duke University, and the University of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, where he was also a lecturer for several years. He is the author of *The Ancient Wisdom of Origen* and numerous articles.

"Smith's translation is first rate. It reads smoothly and clearly. . . . Smith has done a good service to the field." *Church History*

"The decision to translate and publish the homilies on 1 Kings and Jeremiah together was a sound one for two reasons. First, they are the only homilies of Origen that have been preserved in Greek, rather than Latin. Second, neither has ever been published in English before. Thus this volume is to be greeted by anglophones with especially loud huzzahs. . . . A solid, respectable volume, which clearly sees its role as being as transparent a medium for Origen's thoughts as possible." *Laval theologique et philosophique*

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