

Jeremiah 01 - The Call of Jeremiah

I. Jeremiah's call (Jer 1:1-19)

- (1) Jeremiah's background (1:1-3)
 - (A) Son of Hilkiah (1:1)
 - (B) Scope of ministry (1:2-3)
- (2) Jeremiah's call (1:4-10)
 - (A) Election (1:4-5)
 - (B) Jeremiah's objection (1:6)
 - (C) Divine affirmation (1:7-9)
 - (a) He will be sent by God (1:7)
 - (b) Deliverance (1:8)
 - (c) He will speak God's Word (1:9)
 - (D) Mission (1:10)
- (3) Signs depicting Jeremiah's Ministry (1:11-16)
 - (A) Almond tree (1:11-12)
 - (a) Vision (1:11)
 - (b) Explanation (1:12)
 - (B) Boiling pot (1:13-16)
 - (a) Vision (1:13)
 - (b) Explanation (1:14-16)
 - (i) North as the source of judgment (1:14)
 - (ii) Jerusalem as the object of judgment (1:15)
 - (iii) Idolatry as the reason for judgment (1:16)
- (4) Jeremiah's function (1:17-19)
 - (A) Jeremiah's mission (1:17)
 - (B) Jeremiah's protection (1:18-19)

Jeremiah 1

I. Jeremiah's call (Jer 1:1-19)

- (1) Jeremiah's background (1:1-3)
 - (A) Son of Hilkiah (1:1)

1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,

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1 The words of Hilkiah's son Jeremiah, who was one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.

1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

— "The words of Jeremiah" - should be "the word of the Lord as given to Jeremiah." He doesn't limit his narrative to the words that the Lord gave him in a direct sense. It's the words of Jeremiah in addition to the word that the Lord gives him.

— Jeremiah is very free with autobiographical background, how he felt, what he did, and so on. There will be an abundance of insight into the politics of the time, the context into which he is dealing, and, perhaps, most important for all of us, what was really going on in Jeremiah's life (not just the unvarnished raw prophecies and such).

— "...the son of Hilkiah" - this refers to the Hilkiah that was mentioned earlier who is accredited with the discovery of the missing book of the Law.

— They had so forgotten the God of Israel that they actually discovered a book of the Law in the Temple.

— It gives the reader an idea of how destitute they were of orthodox practices during Josiah's reign—and his encouragement brought them back.

— "...of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin" - Benjamin is quite a place, borders to the south of Judah and to the north of Ephraim.

— It is the buffer state between Israel and Judah. The land of Benjamin gave us King Saul, succeeded by David, and Saul succeeded by himself as Paul, Saul of Tarshish.

(B) Scope of ministry (1:2-3)

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

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2 This message from the LORD came to him during the thirteenth year of the reign of Ammon's son Josiah, the king of Judah,

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

- In the words of king Josiah (even though some of his reforms didn't take hold) he was a good guy. His reign produced Jeremiah; he came, was called, and prospered in a spiritual sense.

— It also produced Daniel. Daniel was imported as a teenager, but he was impressed by Josiah. You can see that he might not have known a lot about God, but you can inspect his fruits.

3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, **until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.**

3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

3 and during the reign of Josiah's son Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and continued until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month, at the end of the eleventh year of the reign of Josiah's son Zedekiah, the king of Judah.

3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah King of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

- He is skipping ahead to the end. All these guys are the sons of Josiah, the other four besides Josiah had their names changed.

- "...until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month" - this is the last siege we're talking about. So this is a sort of overview of his call and his scope.

(2) Jeremiah's call (1:4-10)

(A) Election (1:4-5)

4 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

4 This message from the LORD came to me:

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I **consecrated** you; I have appointed you as a **prophet** to the nations."

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

5 "I knew you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart for me before you were born; I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

- Four things there: he knew, formed, consecrated, and appointed.

- "...consecrated" - means set aside for holy purposes, set apart for holy service

- "...prophet" - called out to forth tell God's plan. A prophet doesn't talk about the future; he talks about the whole view of God's dealing.

— The part that is fascinating is the part that is coming, but a prophet is more than just a fortuneteller, he is a forth teller, he speaks forth God's Word.

Compare this to the call of Amos (Amos 7:10-17), you'll find parallels which you can contrast with the calls of Isaiah (Is 6) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-26). The one thing that does begin to show up in Jer 1:5, and will be a vivid theme throughout the book of Jeremiah, is relationship. You are going to discover, if you are attentive, that Jeremiah has a relationship with the Lord. It is not what you know, it is who you know. Knowing the book isn't enough, you need to know its author. The most important thing in his life is his relationship, and it is a coupling between his relationship with his Lord and his relationship with his nation. He is close to the Lord, and that leads him to do some surprising things. He calls down vengeance on his enemies. Many scholars are very troubled by some passages in Jeremiah, which they feel are very ungodly. They fail to see where he is coming from and what he is really saying. There is such a thing as righteous indignation. Jeremiah is passionate, forthright, and direct.

(B) Jeremiah's objection (1:6)

6 Then I said, "Oh, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a **youth**."

6 Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth."

6 I replied, "Ah, LORD God! Look, I don't know how to speak, because I'm only a young man."

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child.

- Reminiscent of Ex 4, when Moses told God, "I cannot speak, I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue."

- "...youth" - *na'ar*, likely refers to someone under 30 years old

-- Used in Gen 14:21 of the men in Abraham's army; also used of Absalom's rebellion in 2 Sam 18:5

-- Jeremiah is young for his calling, and feels that he is immature for the role that God is calling him to

(C) Divine affirmation (1:7-9)

(a) He will be sent by God (1:7)

7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak.

7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak.

7 Then the LORD told me, "Don't say, 'I'm only a young man,' for you will go everywhere I send you, and you will speak everything I command you.

7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

- God had no concern with Jeremiah's young age or inexperience; He was only concerned that Jeremiah was available and willing

(b) Deliverance (1:8)

8 "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to save you," declares the LORD.

8 "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.

8 Don't be afraid of them, because I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.

8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

(c) He will speak God's Word (1:9)

9 Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

9 Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

9 The LORD stretched out his hand, touched my mouth, and then told me, "Look, I've put my words in your mouth.

9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

(D) Mission (1:10)

10 "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to tear down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant."

10 "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant."

10 See, today I've appointed you to prophesy about nations and kingdoms, to pull up and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

- In other words, "you are going to be my vehicle, Jeremiah." It is interesting that he just touched his mouth, which is a lot more humane than what Isaiah went through.

— Recall the coals from the altar, there is a parallel and yet it is different. It might have been the same, yet Jeremiah didn't choose to elaborate.

— In any case it is clear that Jeremiah spoke as God specifically, expressly instructed. He also gave him the comfort of the protection. It will be clear that he had the benefit of that protection. Jeremiah goes through all sorts of adversities continually, and all the way through, he never wavers.

— He evidences, not only God's word, but the relationship. That is the one thing that is going to come through, and that is what makes him such a spiritual giant.

(3) Signs depicting Jeremiah's Ministry (1:11-16)

(A) Almond tree (1:11-12)

(a) Vision (1:11)

11 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

11 The word of the LORD came to me saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a rod of an almond tree."

11 This message from the LORD came to me, asking, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I replied, "I see an almond branch."

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

- Jeremiah seems to draw a lot upon nature. The almond tree blooms in January, the middle of winter, it blooms early, and so it is considered a precursor to spring. Spring is just around the corner.

(b) Explanation (1:12)

12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."

12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."

12 The LORD told me, "You have observed well, because I'm watching over my message, to make sure it comes about."

12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

- The almond tree is used as a figure of something coming. There is a play on words. Almond tree is *sigid, soged* means "God is watching." There is also a pun of sorts. The Lord is watching over this and he is going to make it happen.

(B) Boiling pot (1:13-16)

(a) Vision (1:13)

13 And the word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north."

13 The word of the LORD came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north."

13 This message from the LORD came to me a second time: "What do you see?" I replied, "I see a boiling pot, and its mouth is tilted away from the north."

13 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof *is* toward the north.

- This is misleading as it is translated. It's looking toward the north but it is facing this way, south. Babylon isn't northward, but its path to Israel is (they go on the Crescent, because of the impassable desert). So the Babylonians attack on Israel will come from the North.

(b) Explanation (1:14-16)

(i) North as the source of judgment (1:14)

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north the evil will be unleashed on all the inhabitants of the land.

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land.

14 Then the LORD told me, "From the north disaster will pour out on all who live in the land,

14 Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

(ii) Jerusalem as the object of judgment (1:15)

15 For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the LORD; "and they will come and place, each one of *them*, **his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem**, and against all its walls around, and against all the cities of Judah.

15 For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares the LORD; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah.

15 because I'm about to summon all the families and kingdoms from the north," declares the LORD. "They'll come and each one will set up his seat at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all of its surrounding walls, and against all of the towns of Judah.

15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

- "...his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem" - in other words, that is where the city business was done, at the gates.

(iii) Idolatry as the reason for judgment (1:16)

16 And I will pronounce My judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, since they have abandoned Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the

works of their own hands.

16 I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

16 "I'll pronounce my judgments against them because of all their wickedness. They have forsaken me, they have burned incense to other gods, and they have bowed down in worship to the works of their own hands."

16 And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands

- Idols didn't happen, they were the works of man's hands (secular humanism).

— That doesn't mean that achievement isn't worth pursuing. Our society should develop people who have the drive or skill to achieve, but we don't worship it. In our society, we do. Idolatry is the root cause of all the things that beset our nation.

(4) Jeremiah's function (1:17-19)

(A) Jeremiah's mission (1:17)

17 Now, *belt your garment* around your waist and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will make you dismayed before them.

17 Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them.

17 "As for you, get ready! Stand up and tell them everything that I've commanded you. Don't be frightened as you face them, or I'll frighten you right in front of them.

17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

(B) Jeremiah's protection (1:18-19)

18 Now behold, I have made you today like a fortified city and like a pillar of iron and walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its leaders, to its priests, and to the people of the land.

18 Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land.

18 "As for me, today I'm making you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land.

18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof,

against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

19 And they will fight against you but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to save you," declares the LORD.

19 They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord.

19 They'll fight against you, but they won't prevail against you, because I am with you," declares the LORD, "to deliver you."

19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

- Jeremiah embraced the promise that God would take care of him, he took refuge in it, and was an unfledgling, unfailing prophet that succeeded spiritually because of his ability to take on that.

- Isaiah speaks of the Salvation of the Lord, Ezekiel the Glory of the Lord, Daniel the Kingdom of the Lord, and Jeremiah the Judgment of the Lord.