



Jeremiah 1

7274-7309 Jeremiah
CHAPTER 1

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Jeremiah 1 as we continue our journey through the scripture.

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

Anathoth was about three miles to the north-east north of Jerusalem. It was one of the priestly cities. The priests were not given an inheritance in the land. The Lord was their inheritance. They did have certain cities. Anathoth was one of the priestly cities. Hilkiah was the high priest at the time that Josiah was King over Judah. There is reason to believe that this Hilkiah the father of Jeremiah was indeed the high priest at that time. So it would mean that he came from a family of notable spiritual influence in Israel.

His uncle was Shallum and Huldah the prophetess was the wife of Shallum. Thus his aunt Huldah was the prophetess that they consulted when they found the words of the Law.

To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son so Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign (1:2).

Now Josiah came to the throne of Israel after the reign of Amon. Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah. Jeremiah is about sixty years after Hezekiah's time. When Hezekiah died his son Manassah took the throne. Manassah was an extremely wicked king. He killed the prophets of God. According to tradition he had Isaiah the prophet sawed in two. In the Book of Hebrews it talks about how these men of God of whom the world was not worthy, how they were killed and sawn asunder or sawn in two.

It is thought that that is the reference to Isaiah at the hands of cruel Manassah. Manassah was totally evil. He led the nation in a downward plunge from which it never fully recovered. At the death of Manassah his son Amon took the throne and ruled only for two years. At his death Josiah came to the throne but Josiah was only eight years old when he became king in Judah. When he was sixteen years old he began a spiritual reformation. During this time of spiritual reformation they began to rebuild the temple which had become wasted because of disuse. It had become a trash heap and it had deteriorated. Thus they went in and began to remodel and refurbish the temple. In the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah is when Jeremiah began his prophecy and his prophesying to the nation.

It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah (1:3).

So, these are the final days of Judah before going into captivity. When reign of Josiah ended at his death, Jehoash took the throne. Jeremiah does not mention Jehoash probably because he only reigned for three months before he was assassinated. When Jehoash was assassinated Jehoiakim came to the throne. Jehoiakim ruled for eleven years and his reign was followed by Jehoiachin. Jeremiah does not recognize him either. He was eight years old when he started to reign and he only reigned for three months and he was wiped out. It was a time of real civil turmoil and unrest and thus those two short reigns are not recognized. The longer reigns were acknowledged here. And Zedekiah reigned for eleven years before he was carried away as a captive to Babylon.

So Jeremiah lived during this whole period of the fall of Judah to Babylon. He lived through the sieges and the captivities, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. And he was called of God to prophesy in these days of great spiritual declension, days in which the nation had turned from God and had taken a course from which it did not alter. A course that was doomed to bring it to destruction and ultimately did bring the nation to destruction. It is sad to see a nation die. This was the lot of Jeremiah. The interesting thing is that God was still speaking though they had irrevocably turned against Him and had taken the course that was destined to destroy them God continued to speak.

God just does not give up. And He continues to speak even after a person has taken a direction and course of life that is going to ensure that person's destruction. The Lord continues to speak. Thus was the case with Jeremiah. The marvelous thing was that God was still speaking to these people and still calling them to repent, still calling them to return to God. Though they did not and it ultimately brought their ruin. They had false prophets and it must be noted that the false prophets were encouraging them in their practices. The false prophets were saying that Jeremiah was a liar and that he was not prophesying of God and that surely they were going to triumph over their foes and they were going to drive out the Babylonians. These false prophets prevailed in Israel. Tragically Israel was destroyed.

He prophesied,

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 (1:3).

That would be the month of August. It is in the spiritual calendar of Israel which began in April.

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying (1:4),

This is a recounting of the beginning of this experience of Jeremiah in hearing the word of the LORD. All through the book of Jeremiah you hear this phrase repeated, "The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet saying". As we read over and over how the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, it is interesting and my mind is curious just how did the LORD did speak to Jeremiah? Was it an audible voice? Was it a still small inner voice? Jeremiah speaks with such confidence that "the word of the LORD came to me saying," you wonder how did the LORD speak to Jeremiah.

Today people often times use that terminology, "Well the LORD spoke to me the other day and the LORD showed me." We use terms like that. Rarely does a person refer to having heard an audible voice. I do believe that the LORD speaks to me and has spoken to me. I must confess that I have never heard an audible voice. Now if a person declares that they have heard an audible voice of God speaking to them I do not doubt that. I believe that God can speak to people audibly, I am only making mention of the fact that He has never spoken to me audibly. On a few occasion God has spoken to me in such a powerful way that it was almost audible. It was just such a way in which He spoke to me it was as though it were an audible voice but I have never really heard an audible voice from the LORD.

With Jeremiah it would appear that it was not an audible voice. We find the case where the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah saying, "buy the field of your uncle for it is coming up for redemption and the right of redemption is yours." Now this happened when the Babylonians were besieging the city of Jerusalem. At that time Jeremiah was in the dungeon for his prophecies. The next day his cousin Hanameel came to him and said, "My father has sent me to ask you to redeem his field for the right of redemption is yours." Then Jeremiah said, "Then I knew it was the word of the LORD that came to me saying buy the field." He had the impression, evidently, "I ought to go ahead and redeem the field that belonged to my uncle." When the cousin came and said "My father sent me to ask you to redeem the field" then it was confirmation to his heart that it was really the LORD speaking to him. We will talk more about that when we get to that portion of Jeremiah's prophecy.

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee (1:4-5);

So it goes back even before conception in the foreknowledge of God He knew Jeremiah. In God's foreknowledge He knew you. The book of Revelation speaks of those who's names were written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world. God is omniscient. He dwells in a dimension that is so far above and beyond our dimension that it is impossible for us to comprehend Him. And God who dwells in the eternal can speak of things as existing though they do not as yet exist because He knows that they are going to exist. So much of the Bible is prophecy written in advance, as God spoke of things that were not yet. They had not yet been fulfilled within the time continuum though as far as God's eternal plan they were already

accomplished facts. God's knowledge and calling of Jeremiah began even before he was even conceived. "Before you were formed I knew you."

and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations (1:5).

Now you remember when John the Baptist was being carried in his mother Elizabeth's womb. Mary who at that time was pregnant with Jesus came to visit her cousin Elizabeth. As Mary greeted her cousin Elizabeth said, "What is it that the mother of my Lord should come to visit me, for the moment you spoke the babe leaped within my womb." Now John was ordained by God to be the forerunner of Christ before He was ever born, before He was ever conceived. Elizabeth was an old woman. The Bible says "well stricken in years." That means she was so old that she bent over as older people sometimes are. She was bent over with years. Zacharias was an old man. As he was there performing the functions of the priests and it was his lot at that time to offer the incense before the altar of incense. The angel of Gabriel appeared unto him and told him, "Fear not, Zacharias: For thy prayer is heard." He said, "Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John. And he shall go before the Lord in the Spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." So this announcement of John as the forerunner of Christ was the fulfillment of the promise that before the Messiah that God would send Elijah to prepare the hearts of the people.

The father Zacharias doubted because of Elizabeth's age how that could ever be. He sought a sign and Gabriel said, "All right I'll give you a sign; you will not be able to speak until the day the child is born." So Elizabeth conceived and the child was destined, even before conception, to be the forerunner for the Messiah. God has a plan and a purpose for each of our lives. We are not here by happenstance. You have been created by God for a special purpose; for a special mission.

You remember when the Jews were being threatened with extermination because of the wicked desires of Haman the Persian to destroy the Jews. And how the King Ahasuerus had signed the decree and Mordecai was urging Esther to go in and get the decree amended. She was reluctant because of the protocol of the Persian court. You just did not go in unless you were called. Mordecai said to her, "How do you know but what God has not brought you to the kingdom for a such an hour as this, that the whole plan of God through all the previous background, all the things that have happened: your choice to be brought before the king, his choice of you as his wife to replace Vashti, Vashti's rebellion against her husband, her dismissal, how do you know but what God's hand is in all of this, to bring you to just this point, this time, this hour."

The exciting thing about committing your life to the Lord is that God will bring about circumstances in order that He might fulfill His plan in your life and through your life. Every day is an exciting day because you don't know but what God maybe has not had all of the background and past preparing you for just such a time as this. Who knows what God has in store for the future?

The Lord seems to be opening some extremely exciting doors for us. Opportunities that just stagger and boggle my mind. As the Lord opens doors you just have to go through them. If the Lord sets before you an open door you can't just say, "Well, I wonder..." You have to go until He shuts the door. And so I'm moving until the Lord shuts the door. I am moving toward this door that seems to be open. I have been invited by one of the highest officials in the Chinese government to come to China to talk to them in the seminaries there about evangelical Christianity in America, to speak to the largest three-self movement church in Beijing about Evangelical Christianity. They have got me all scheduled for these meetings in the seminaries and with these different leaders in China and it is mind boggling. The door seems to be opened now. Who knows what the Lord may do but we are responding and seeing what God may want to do. Who knows what the future holds. It is exciting because you know that God is in control and that maybe all of the background up to this point is just preparing for this future that God has.

Before, God said I formed you I knew you. Before you were born, before you came out of the womb I had set you apart and I had ordained you to be a prophet to the nations. Now though his primary prophecy

was to Judah, he did also prophecy to the nations. As we get into the book of Jeremiah we will find him prophesying against Babylon, prophesying concerning Edom and other nations. God called him as prophet to the nations.

His response was:

Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child (1:6).

The word child is usually a reference to a teenager and thus it is thought that he was probably still in his teens at the time that the Lord spoke to him and the word of the LORD came to him and told him that He was going to use him as a prophet to the nation. So you can understand his reticence. It was not though an unwillingness, it was not, “I will not” but, “I can not” speak for I am child. So to this objection the LORD declared:

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 (1:7).

“I can not speak.” “I don’t want you to just say whatever I command you.” “Lord I am not eloquent!” “I don’t want you to be eloquent all I want is for you to speak My word.” That is all God wants, is for you to share His word. You don’t have to be eloquent, just the word He gives to you, the word that He places in your mouth, that is what you are to share with others.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD (1:8).

So commissioned to go, to speak the word of the LORD, commissioned not to fear for the presence of the LORD would be with him.

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. 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 (1:9–10).

There are times a nation has become so corrupt, so far gone, that there can be no rebuilding until it is first of all leveled. In some of these earthquakes when a house has been shaken off of its foundation, there is no rebar in the bricks. The house is too far gone to try to put it back on the foundation and rebuild it. What you have to do is just first of all tear the thing down completely before you can start rebuilding. You have to then rebuild from the bottom up. Such was the case with the nation of Judah. His prophetic ministry was first of all tearing down that which was left, pulling it up by the roots, rooting it out. Then after it had been torn down and rooted out then began the planting and the building. Things are going to get a lot worse basically before they get better. You are to pull down, to root out, to destroy and then you are to build and to plant. I really feel that the world and our nation has come to that point in history that Judah was where it is too far gone to just try to rebuild. I think that the government is too far down the tubes. I don’t think that it is salvageable at this point. I think that we are at that point of just being leveled and then I believe the Lord is going to begin His building and His planting of the glorious kingdom. I think that we really have come to that stage of history where man has gone too far down the path that leads to destruction and that there is no turning back at this point.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou (1:11)?

Now he is going to have a vision at this point. He is asking Jeremiah what he sees.

And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it (1:11–12).

You really need the Hebrew language to grasp this completely. The word almond in the Hebrew is ‘awake.’ The reason why the word almond is awake in the Hebrew is that the almond tree is the first tree that

begins to blossom after losing its leaves in the winter. The almond begins in Israel to blossom in the end of January and the first of February. It is the first of the trees to awake from winter. Literally the LORD said, "What do you see" and he said, "I see the rod of an awake tree." The LORD responded, "You see well for I will..." and the word hasten is the word awake in Hebrew, "I will awake my word to perform it." Or "I see the rod of a watch tree" and God said, "I will watch over my word to perform it." So the promise that God is going to watch over His word, He is going to perform His word.

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. Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. 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. 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 (1:13-16).

I see this boiling pot in the north but it is tipping toward the south. So God said that out of the north there is going to come this flood of armies who are going to destroy. It is a reference to Babylon, who is east yet is also when coming into the land Israel came through Syria down through the northern part of the land, Dan, and then on down through Jerusalem. So coming from the north and bringing destruction in her weight and conquering over Jerusalem.

Now God says that He will fulfill His judgments against Judah for their wickedness because they have forsaken God and have burned incense to other gods and worshipped the works of their own hands. Forsaken God and worshipped other gods is what they did. Many times when a lady comes to me and says, "Chuck I want you to pray for me, my husband said that he does not love me any more and he is moving out. He just does not want to live with me anymore." I will ask them who he is interested in. She says that she doesn't think that he has any other girlfriend. I say that I am sorry to tell you this but I have never seen a man move out unless he is moving in. There is another interest. They say, "Oh no, I don't think so, no, no," I say that that has been my experience and usually in a month or so they are shocked. A person generally does not move into a void. When you leave the worship of God you have to worship something. You don't just live in a vacuum or in a void. There is something that has replaced God in your life. There is another interest, another desire, there is something else that has replaced God in your life. Another God.

Here with Judah it was Baal, Ashteroth, Mammon, and Molech. These were the gods that they had turned to. Ashteroth is the worship of sex or sex became their god. Their lust of the flesh and desires for sex became the masters of their life. They were mastered by their sex drives, which were inflamed through pornography. They turned away from God because God has prohibited sex except within the family unit, between husband and wife. They felt that that was too restrictive. So they rebelled against God and the commandments of God and they began to worship Ashteroth.

Mammon was the god of pleasure. They began to live for pleasure, forsaking God and the worship of God and just living for pleasure, the pleasure that could be derived from drugs or from certain activities or power. Molech the god of pleasure and Mammon the god of power. They started living for possessions, building fancy houses and things of this nature. They became absorbed in their processions and they worshipped the works of their own hands.

Therefore, gird up your loins was the call on Jeremiah. Girding up your loins: we mentioned this before. The fellas wore skirts. Long skirts are hard to work in or run in. Whenever you were going to go to work you would lift up your skirt, tie it high with a sash so that you would have a short skirt. That way you could work. The girding up of your loins is always the tying up of your skirt with a sash to make it shorter so you could go to work or so you could run.

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 (1:17).

The LORD is telling him back in the beginning not to be afraid of their faces. They are going to be looking in anger at you. They are not going to like what you are saying. You are going to see their faces contorted with anger as you prophecy to them. But don't let that turn you from My word. Don't modify what I am saying. Don't try to appease them. If you are intimidated by the faces that they are making at you I will just let you be confounded before them.

For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city (1:18),

The LORD is saying that I will be your defense Jeremiah, I will be the One who protects you, I will watch over you and you will be as a defenced city and an iron pillar and brass walls against the whole land. You are going to stand almost alone in this Jeremiah because I will give you the strength and I will protect you.

against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land (1:18).

The land was corrupted, the priesthood was corrupted, there were false prophets. "Jeremiah, you will be like a lone voice in the wilderness. You will be standing up against even the religious people and the religious leaders."

And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee (1:19).

It is not going to be easy. I like it that the LORD does not draw us through false kind of pretexts. The LORD does not say, "Oh if you will just yield to My way it will be so beautiful and wonderful. You will find yourself such ease and things will be so smooth." The LORD is saying to Jeremiah that it is going to be tough. They are going to fight against you. They are going to contort their faces and it is going to be tough but I am going to be with you. You will be as a defenced city. I will watch over you, I will take care of you. They will fight against you but they will not prevail. You are going to prevail Jeremiah. They will fight against you.

As we go through the prophet and of course we get the history of this prophecy also and you will find out they are going to be fighting against him. The other prophets are going to be fighting against him, the priests will be. He is going to be doing things that are going to anger people. During the reign of Josiah there is coming this spiritual reformation, the king ordered it. He ordered the temple to be rebuilt, all the idols to be cast down and destroyed. The places of the worship of the other gods he ordered them eradicated. Because Josiah was a good king and a popular king the people went along with him and they started going back to church.

They started going back to the temple and once again the temple was filled on Sabbath day. "Oh great move of God, revival!" No, no, no, it was only surface, it has not gotten down to the real heart and life of the people. Because it is sort of a false kind of revival in that it is only surface and not really touching their hearts the LORD said to Jeremiah to go down to the house of the LORD and as the people are going in cry out to them not to trust in lying vanities saying "the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these." Here people are going to the temple and he is out there shouting. "You are trusting in a lying vanity." That would upset the priest. A guy out there calling out there to the people that are coming to worship. So it is going to be tough and they will fight against you, but they will not prevail against thee for I am with thee, saith the LORD to deliver thee. It is going to be hard and they will fight against you but they will not prevail. Why? Because the LORD is with you.

We really do not have time to move into the second chapter because there is much in this second chapter that I want to deal with and it would take us two weeks. I have the dilemma if I should quit early or do I go in to the next one and have everyone weary because I have gone over time. So there is a proverb that says,

“Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor’s house; lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee.” So I will opt for the earlier one for I’d rather that you go away hungry, than go away burping because you have been so stuffed, so I will give you the second chapter to study over for our next session together. We will go chapters two and three. Even as the LORD promised to Jeremiah that He would watch over His word to fulfill it, so may the LORD watch over your life to fulfill in your life His purposes and His plans. And I pray that by and through the Spirit of God that you will come to an understanding of what God has set you apart for and what God has ordained for you, that work that God has ordained for you to fulfill while you are here on this earth, that work for His kingdom and His glory. So may your heart be open that the word of the LORD might come to you and guide and direct you in the place of service where you might find the will and the purpose of God being fulfilled in your life. The LORD be with you, the LORD bless and keep you.