

21. Jesus in Jeremiah

June 16, 2016

For over 42 years prophet Jeremiah stood virtually alone in the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom – preaching, warning, pleading, and trying to wake up the idolatrous nation to the reality that judgment would surely come unless they didn't repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness and compassion. During those 42 long years, Jeremiah had no convert, no encouragement, no nothing from anyone except the Lord.

This Book is, pretty much, in many ways, the autobiography of Jeremiah, whom the Lord raised up in a difficult place at a peculiar time doing a very unpopular work. The timeline falls around 585 to 580 B.C.

I like the way J. Oswald Sanders described Jeremiah: "A figure of bronze dissolving into tears." This prophet had a balance of tenderness and toughness – a warmth of spirit that was very sensitive to people's needs and a willingness to lay himself bare in total honesty before the Lord at the same time fearlessness in serving Him in spite of threats against his life, very much like our Lord Jesus while He was on earth.

Don't write off Jeremiah as an insignificant prophet who whined a lot. His comments were quoted by our Savior and Lord Jesus more than any other prophets in the OT. Obviously Jesus thought what Jeremiah said was important.

The theme of the Book is to warn God's people of judgment and to urge them to repent, before it was too late. But the people ignored Jeremiah. They even threw him into captivity more than once – out of sight, out of mind. The warnings become the consequences when we don't take them seriously. In my personal opinion, the current situation around the world is a pretty much dire duplicate of the time of Jeremiah.

Many of the details of Jeremiah's activity depict the response of the nation of Israel to the first coming and the ministry of the Lord Jesus. You could write these words of the Lord Jesus over the pages of Jeremiah:

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Let me show you some key points about the call and ministry of Jeremiah. Then, we'll take a look at the similarities to the ministry of God's Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. JESUS IN THE CALL BEFORE THE BIRTH

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

The Lord had put His hand upon the prophet before he was born. I am sure that it was such a comfort for Jeremiah to remember his calling in the difficult years to follow.

You all know that there are so many verses in the Bible that prophesied about the birth of Jesus, so I am not going to bore you with them.

B. JESUS IN TEARS

Jeremiah 13:17 But if you will not hear it, My soul will weep in secret for your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly And run down with tears, Because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.

The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, was telling the people to heed His advice and follow His direction. But no one did. After their rejection to Jeremiah's prophecies, the Israelis became captives of Babylon and were taken to Babylon in exile. After their rejection of the Son of God, the Israelis became captives of Rome and were dispersed all over the world.

Luke 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

While the crowd was rejoicing here, Jesus was weeping! This is the second occasion on which our Lord wept openly, the first being at the tomb of Lazarus in John 11. There He wept quietly, but here He made a loud wailing like one mourning over the dead. And He did it for a good reason.

C. THE POTTER'S WILL

Jeremiah 18:1-6 The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"

You may wonder what this portion of the Book of Jeremiah has to do with Jesus. I probably can stretch the connection with a set of very thin strings, but this is such important part of the Book and I didn't want you guys to miss out.

I haven't seen anyone who was so mesmerized by a lump of clay. There is no beauty or attraction in itself, but when the hands of the potter touch it, and the thought of the potter comes to life upon the clay, it transforms into beauty from nothing.

When the clay seemed uncooperative, the potter started it all over again. Yes, though the interpretation of the image was for the nation of Judah, but the application was individual, calling for a response from the people of Judah and Jerusalem. It also calls for a personal response from us today.

To some people, including Christians, they are such a cat's meow in their own eyes. They think of themselves way too highly and they even think that God has to cater to their needs. News flash, He doesn't.

Let's make a logical thinking here. Man was made out of the dust of the earth. Until the Lord put breath into his nostrils, it was still a lump of clay. In other words, we are nothing, unless the Lord has His hands on us.

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

As the potter has power and will over the clay, so our God has absolute sovereign authority and will over the nations and individuals. I know what Sir John Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." But that only applies to humans, not our God, because He doesn't have the sinful nature to corrupt His character, like we do.

Though our Lord has absolute power, He is not irresponsible and arbitrary in what He does. Everything He does is always consistent with His nature, which is holy, just, wise, and loving. He does NOT need our advice, nor does He want to. Additionally, we have NO right to criticize or demand what He does, because we are nothing more than His creations.

Romans 11:34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"

Of course, those who put too much importance on humanity, think that God should include humans' opinions in His decision making process. Guess what, the universe is owned and run by our God who reigns in a monarch style, not a democratic style. When was the last time the majority vote did do any good in this country? We live by divine promises and precepts, not theological explanations. Additionally, He is not obligated to explain anything to us.

D. JESUS IN PERSECUTION

Jeremiah 18:18-21 Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." 19 Give heed to me, O Lord, And listen to the voice of those who contend with me! 20 Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I stood before You To speak good for them, To turn away Your wrath from them. 21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, And pour out their blood By the force of the sword; Let their wives become widows And bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, Their young men be slain By the sword in battle.

These arrogant sinners who wanted their sins to continue without any interruption from God didn't want to hear any more of God's sovereignty or the sermons of impending judgment from Him through the prophet Jeremiah. They thought that if they could silence God's messenger Jeremiah, He couldn't speak to them anymore.

Isn't that the same reason unbelievers persecute Christians around the world? Being persecuted by unbelievers is not "if", rather "when." Jesus gave us the warning regarding this:

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

E. JESUS IN DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER

Jeremiah 22:24-28 "As I live," says the Lord, "though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25 and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear--the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 So I will cast you out, and your

mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27 But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return. 28 "Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol-- A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know?"

When you read this verse, did you ask yourself a question or two:

What kind of pleasure and for whose pleasure? Obviously it is not talking about physical pleasure in context. But whose pleasure? Of course, God's pleasure.

Many people rebel against this truth because of their self-centered mindset. To them, it is not fair for God would create them for His pleasure. Since they don't like that fact, they can always create themselves in somewhere outside of this universe which also belongs to the Lord since He created it. The Lord has every right to do whatever He chooses to do since He created all things and everything belongs to Him.

One particular Book in the Bible that reveals about Jesus more than any other Books is the Book of Revelation. In chapter 4, the apostle John gives us a glimpse of the worship scene in the Throne Room of Heaven:

Revelation 4:9-11 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Jesus made it very clear to us in John 6 about His assignment from the Father:

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

F. JESUS IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Of course, Jeremiah was prophesying about Jesus as "the Lord our Righteousness", a.k.a. "Yahweh Tsidkenu". This brings up other names of God that describe His characters:

- Yahweh Jireh: "The Lord will provide."
God's provision for His people (Genesis 22:14).
- Yahweh Nissi: "The Lord is my Banner."
God is our rallying point and our means of victory; the One who fights for His people (Exodus 17:15).
- Yahweh Shalom: "The Lord is Peace."
God is the means of our peace and rest (Judges 6:24).
- Yahweh Sabbaoth: "The Lord of Hosts."
A military figure portraying the Lord as the commander of the armies of heaven (1 Samuel 1:3; 17:45).
- Yahweh Maccaddeshcem: "The Lord your Sanctifier."
God is our means of sanctification or as the one who sets believers apart for His purposes (Exodus 31:13).
- Yahweh Ro'i: "The Lord my Shepherd."
God is the Shepherd who cares for His people as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 23:1).

- Yahweh Shammah: "The Lord is there."
God's personal presence in the millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 48:35).
- Yahweh Elohim Israel: "The Lord, the God of Israel."
God is the God of Israel in contrast to the false gods of other nations (Judges 5:3.; Isaiah 17:6).

As God's people today, we must realize that our righteousness only comes from the Lord Jesus and His atoning sacrifice, never from our own.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption