

MY SERVANT THE PROPHET

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## OUTLINE

Introduction: Jeremiah represents a true picture of God's prophets.

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- III. Jeremiah's Characteristics
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Conclusion: Jeremiah a type of God's final servant <sup>T</sup>he Prophet

## MY SERVANT THE PROPHET

The great prophet Jeremiah represents a true picture of Jehovah's servants the prophets. A priest by birth and a prophet by divine calling, Jeremiah's life may be considered a prolonged martyrdom. After realizing the severity of the trials and opposition which confronted Jeremiah we can well appreciate his courage. How often does the shrinking from a task meet us, as it did Jeremiah? His instinctive timidity was thrown in the background time and again as he faced the crisis of the moment speaking the words of Jehovah. Surely this moral victory was greater with him than one who has never known fear or the great emotional, inner conflict with self. When his courage flagged "the word of Jehovah came unto him" to buoy him up, onward to meet and fight and finally conquer as Jehovah's servant--the prophet.

God's hand was upon Jeremiah even before birth. His "appointing" as a prophet was as fixed as God could secure it, for the root form of the word is found in Daniel 7:9,<sup>1</sup> concerning the "placing" of the throne of the Ancient of Days. Jeremiah was born in Anathoth of Benjamin some few miles north east of Jerusalem. It is believed by some that the priestly father of Jeremiah was a descendent of Abiathor which had been placed in Anathoth by Solomon. This is the more feasible of the explanations. If Jeremiah's father had been Hilkiah the High Priest undoubtedly Jeremiah would have mentioned it. Furthermore a high priest would not have been allowed to live so far from Jerusalem and the Temple.<sup>2</sup>

Jeremiah's mission in itself was unique. For the first time one had been placed own nations and kingdoms, not only to warn the children of Judah but

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1. Biblical Com. Keil and Delit. pp. 11.

also to speak God's words whenever contact was made with the heathens of the land (1:10, 17). Because of the character of Jeremiah and the nature of work, with his call came the reassurance, "though they fight against thee: they shall not prevail, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah (1:19). Thus, the prophet was consecrated to the task that lay ahead. The message of Jeremiah, was the message of God, the words of Jeremiah were the words of God. (1:9).

Jeremiah's message was one and the same, approaching doom. Soon the mountains of heaven would melt at the command of Jehovah and would fill the valleys of Judah with the judgement of God. The prolonged captivity was even now at the door. King, priest and false prophet alike had reason to tremble at the indictive words of God's servant. They all had committed two evils, they had forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water (2:13).

Jeremiah began his work in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. Josiah had begun a reformation to the way of Jehovah among the backslidden, idolatrous, covenant breaking people of that day. Nothing is said of Jeremiah's part in a specific way, but no doubt he did all he could to show the righteousness needed to avert the coming tide of judgement.

The boiling caldon of Jeremiah's second vision is poured forth in his words as he describes the evil which shall come from the north (4:5). The clouds of judgement shall bring chariots like the whirlwind, and the horses shall be swifter than eagles (4:13). The land shall be a desolation (4:27). The judgement shall be a nation from afar whose language they understand not and whose men one mighty (5:15-16). She shall be stirred from the uttermost part of the earth (6:22).

What conviction and resolves of heart can be seen in such declarative language. Naturally this resulted in cruel insults from the temple priests (20:2-37:13). His life was threatened by his own countrymen (11:21). He was considered unpatriotic by priest and false prophet alike (26:8-9). Anger rose to unholy heights under such preaching and the King sought his life (36:19-26). The princes sought the very life that flowed through his veins because of his uncompromising spirit which taught the way that was right and cannot be wrong.

Under such external conflicts it is little wonder that the hopelessness of a situation utters its unspoken cry: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth--everyone of them doth curse me" (15:10). "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed (20:14)." Surely passing thoughts like this that are wrung from the heart by the agony of the hour are not the standard by which we could judge a man. Rather the fearless, unrelenting, perseverance of the unchangeable message attests to his unwavering trust and faith in God. Then, from soaring to the heights of communion with God to the depths of the mud pit from whence all looked of despair and loss do we gain a true insight into the character of Jeremiah.

King, priest, prophet, and people alike felt the whiplash of the words of this man who burned because of his love for God who finally could not contain, but had to speak the words of Jehovah. He was open and above board with all of his teaching, fearing none. God had commanded him to speak "unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in Jehovah's house" (26:2). Jeremiah did this very thing, in the face of possible death he spoke unto "all the men--

all the women--the great assembly. . . and all the people that dwelt in Egypt" (44:15). No sin was too great, no crime was too small, nor prince too mighty nor servant too lonely to escape the wrath as revealed by Jeremiah the prophet.

In the face of such opposition and bitter persecution it is amazing to find Jeremiah untouched by such treatment. In fact, compassion is seen in such statements as "My anguish, my anguish, I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted within me; woe is me because of my hurt! My wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is my grief and I must bear it." (4:19, 10:19). Love is the mark of a great man.

Jeremiah was accused of being unpatriotic and a traitor to his people, but are those the facts of the case? No, for a man is a true patriot when he fills the need of the hour for his country. Jeremiah had warned his fellow-countrymen of the impending doom, then when destruction had taken its toll Jeremiah remained with the few to begin anew. He could have enjoyed life in Babylon amidst plenty, but rather he chose to stay with Gadeliah and serve in the place he was needed most.

As the people sought to flee from the wrath of God and sojourn in Egypt, Jeremiah warned, as a true patriot should, for them not to go. Yet in violation to God's commands the Jews took their leave of the promise land and once again Jeremiah, the traitor to his people, was found trying to teach and lead them back to the proper way.

Here, in Egypt we leave this man of God who was raised by Jehovah to be a shining light to those who walked in darkness; who faithfully carried out in the face of all opposition the work of God in preparing the Jews who would ultimately bring in God's final servant, The Prophet.

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