

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part II: God's Guidelines For His Servant's Ministry In Apostate Times (Jeremiah 1:11-19)

I. Introduction

- A. God calls us to minister for Him both in good as well as apostate times, so we must "be instant in season, out of season," serving Him devotedly even when the effort includes spiritual hardships, 2 Timothy 4:2 KJV.
- B. Effective service for God in an apostate era thus takes insight due to the hardships involved, and God gave Jeremiah such insight in Jeremiah 1:11-19. We view this passage for our guidance in serving God in our era:

II. God's Guidelines For His Servant's Ministry In Apostate Times, Jeremiah 1:11-19.

- A. Jeremiah's audience was already spiritually hardened against the Lord by their idolatry so that Jeremiah was going to be proclaiming messages to hearers who would not positively receive them, cf. Jeremiah 1:18-19a.
- B. Thus, so he could serve the Lord effectively in his dark era, God gave Jeremiah guidelines for an effective 40-year ministry (Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1045), what is applicable for us in our apostate era (as follows):
 - 1. Jeremiah obtained God's practical guidance on being sure of rightly interpreting God's Word, v. 11-12a:
 - a. God's word came to Jeremiah asking, "Jeremiah, what seest thou?" (Jeremiah 1:11a KJV)
 - b. Jeremiah said, "I see a rod of an almond tree," and God replied, "Thou has well seen," v. 11b-12a KJV.
 - c. [In our era, as we rely on the Holy Spirit, He guides us to discern the right interpretation of Scripture according to 2 Timothy 1:13-14 and John 16:13 as we view Scripture through the normal use of language - the literal, grammatical, historical contexts of Scripture as exemplified by Jesus in Mark 12:18-27.]
 - 2. Jeremiah obtained God's assurance that He would constantly, sovereignly oversee His correctly interpreted Word to fulfill it regardless of apostate unbelief or resistance to Jeremiah to the contrary, Jeremiah 1:12b:
 - a. The word "almond" is *shaqed* in Hebrew, where "watch, wake" is *shaqad*, meaning that God used a play on words to supply an unforgettable lesson for Jeremiah, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1131.
 - b. The almond tree blooms in January before the tree puts forth leaves (Ibid.), so the illustration teaches the sovereign God oversees His correctly interpreted Word spoken by Jeremiah to fulfill it regardless of the apostate hearers' denials of belief in Scripture or rejection of it since Jeremiah was the one who spoke it!
 - c. [In our era, God uses circumstantial evidences to encourage us that He keeps His Word, 2 Tim. 2:4-7.]
 - 3. Jeremiah gained God's assurance of the message he would bring -- judgment for Judah's idolatry, v. 13-16:
 - a. Having received encouragement from the Lord for correctly interpreting the vision of the almond rod, Jeremiah then received a second vision, that of a large vessel used for cooking that was about to spill its boiling contents from the north towards the south, Jeremiah 1:13; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Jeremiah 1:13-16.
 - b. This vision was interpreted by the Lord to mean that He was sending the Babylonians who would invade Judah from the north, executing God's painful and destructive judgment on the nation, Jeremiah 1:14-15.
 - c. That judgment would occur for all of Judah's wickedness that had risen due to her main sin of replacing the Lord with idol worship and practices of her own initiatives versus heeding Scripture, Jeremiah 1:16.
 - d. [In our era, we have learned that our message centers on the Laodicean Church era message (Rev. 3:14-22) on overcoming our era's false spirituality by Biblical truths versus Calvinism and Arminianism!]
 - 4. This kind of message to hardened apostates would not be well received, making Jeremiah's work difficult, so God gave him directions on long-term survival in ministry, what directly applies to us, Jer. 1:17-19:
 - a. Jeremiah was to "gird up your loins," that is, "Get ready!" (Jer. 1:17a; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 1131) [Successful ministry to those in an apostate era takes constant preparation and focus on Scripture truth!]
 - b. Then, Jeremiah was to speak what God ordered him to speak, even if it was unpopular, Jeremiah 1:17b.
 - c. Giving such a message to apostates who would retaliate against him would be frightening for a sensitive man like Jeremiah, so God told him not to fear them or God would terrify him before them! (Jer. 1:17c)
 - d. This lofty expectation that God had for Jeremiah could be met if he realized that though all the people of the land together with their leaders were going to oppose him, God would be with him to make him stoutly resist yielding to all of their ungodly hardness that produced persecution against him, Jeremiah 1:18-19.

Lesson and Application: *To minister long-term in an apostate era, may we (1) rely on God's guidance of rightly interpreting Scripture, (2) be assured He will fulfill His Word that we speak, (3) be assured of the message we are to give, (4) get mentally ready, vigilant (5) to speak what God directs (6) without fear of hearers' reactions lest God frighten us before them in discipline, (7) assured that God will enable us to endure long-term all who oppose us!*