

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH
I. Insight From Jeremiah's Call To The Ministry
(Jeremiah 1:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. Jeremiah was called of God to minister in the Kingdom of Judah during its spiritual decline until God's judgment fell in the form of the Babylonian invasion and captivity. Jeremiah's spiritual ministry is then similar to what God's servants face in our current era of spiritual decline in the last days of Church History.
- B. We thus view God's call of Jeremiah to his prophetic ministry in Jeremiah 1:1-10 for insight and edification:

II. Insight From Jeremiah's Call To The Ministry, Jeremiah 1:1-10.

- A. God called Jeremiah the priest from Anathoth to be a prophet in the 13th year of Judah's king Josiah, Jer. 1:1-2. Josiah had begun to turn to the Lord, and in the 12th year of his reign, he started to purge Judah of its idols (2 Chron. 34:3-7). In the purge, he fulfilled a 300-year-old prophecy about his birth, naming, and arrival as a Davidic king to defile the syncretistic altar at Bethel (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Kings 13:2).
- B. However, Josiah was the last righteous king in Judah, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1129. Nevertheless, God called Jeremiah to be His spokesman from the days of Josiah down to Judah's fall to Babylon and captivity in 586 B. C., a ministry that spanned over 40 years, *Ibid.*; Jeremiah 1:3.
- C. Such a long ministry in a hard era required a profound call from God, and it is recorded in Jeremiah 1:4-10:
 - 1. God told Jeremiah that before his conception and birth, He had known and appointed him to be a prophet to the nations, Jer. 1:4-5. God's fulfillment of the 300-year-old prophecy of Jeremiah's contemporary, Judah's king Josiah, regarding his birth, naming, and desecration of the altar at Bethel verified the reality of God's eternal plan for Jeremiah on his own destiny as a prophet of God to the difficult people of Judah:
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:9 NIV states that God's ministry assignments for us believers in Church era were given to us "before the beginning of time." (*pro chronon aionion*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 732)
 - b. Similarly, Jeremiah was told a similar truth that had been illustrated in Josiah's life, a truth of God's eternal plan meant to encourage him to serve God faithfully regardless what he would face for 40 years.
 - c. In addition, Jeremiah's call was broadened from ministering to Judah to include a ministry to the nations (Jer. 1:5), for with Judah's coming Babylonian Captivity, God's oversight of His people to preserve His Abrahamic Covenant to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham's seed, Christ (Gen. 12:1-3) necessarily required God's oversight of the nations where His people would be scattered until Israel was regathered and Christ's Kingdom was finally established. Jeremiah's ministry was thus a strategic one regardless if it might often not seem like it in his experience of facing great spiritual hardness in Judah! He needed the confirmation that God viewed his ministry as significant even if others around him did not!
 - 2. Like Moses, Jeremiah was initially reluctant to accept his assignment (Jer. 1:6 with Ex. 4:13 NIV), so he informed God that he did not know how to speak as a prophet since he was too young, Jeremiah 1:6 NIV.
 - 3. The Lord did not deny Jeremiah's youthfulness but ordered him **not** to *say* that he was young, for he was to go to everyone **God** sent him and to say whatever **God** ordered him to say, for **God Himself** (emphatic pronoun '*ane*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 703) was with him to "snatch away" (*nasal*, Hiph. stem, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 664-665; *Ibid.*, Kittel) Jeremiah from harm by his enemies, Jer. 1:7-8.
 - 4. Having said this, the Lord then stretched out His hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth, asserting, "Behold, see (*hinneh*, *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 243-244)!" I have put my words in your mouth!" (Jer. 1:9; *Ibid.*)
 - 5. God added that He had appointed him over the nations and kingdoms of the earth to conduct a ministry of worldwide change – to uproot, tear down, destroy and overthrow, and to plant, Jeremiah 1:10 NIV.

Lesson: *Though he was a modest, humble, young prophet, Jeremiah was called of God to a prophetic ministry to spiritually hard Judah, a ministry that would span forty years from good king Josiah down to apostate Judah's fall to Babylon and captivity. Nevertheless, to encourage Jeremiah to be faithful, God revealed that he would prophecy toward world change, so regardless of his human frailty as a somewhat not respected young man, he was gifted with God's words to minister for the Lord in a very strategic ministry in God's eternal plan.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that God has given us our ministry assignments before time, that God has His hand in our works, and that our ministries are eternally important in God's estimation, that we then faithfully fulfill His calling. (2) If God has called us to our ministry assignment in some profound way with unusual circumstances or precedents as He did Jeremiah, may we always recall it for encouragement to keep at His calling.*