

**THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH**  
**II. Insight From Jeremiah's Ministry Assignment**  
**(Jeremiah 1:11-19)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Jeremiah was called of God to minister in the Kingdom of Judah during its spiritual decline until God's judgment fell with 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 assignment for Jeremiah as His prophet in Jeremiah 1:11-19 for insight and edification:

**II. Insight From Jeremiah's Ministry Assignment, Jeremiah 1:11-19.**

- A. After the Lord had called Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:1-10 to be His prophet to Judah and to the Gentile nations surrounding Judah, God gave Jeremiah his ministry assignment in Jeremiah 1:11-19.
- B. Since Jeremiah had been reluctant to accept his calling because he considered himself to be too young (cf. Jer. 1:6), the Lord taught Jeremiah the basics of his job in small steps in Jeremiah 1:11-14 (as follows):
  - 1. God taught Jeremiah how to understand and to discern God's communication to him, Jeremiah 1:11-12:
    - a. The Lord asked Jeremiah what he saw, and he replied that he saw the branch of an almond tree, v. 11.
    - b. God responded, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my Word to perform it," Jer 1:12 ESV.
    - c. To explain, the Hebrew word for "almond tree" is *shaged*, from *shaqad*, "to watch, wake," for the "almond tree was named the 'awake tree' because in Palestine it is the first tree . . . to bud and bear fruit. Its blooms precede its leaves, as the tree bursts into blossom in late January," B. K. C., O. T., p. 1131.
    - d. Thus, God was also teaching Jeremiah to discern the spiritual significance of God's symbol of the branch of an almond tree, the significance being that God was watching over His Word to fulfill it.
  - 2. God then taught Jeremiah what His task would involve by means of a second vision, Jeremiah 1:13-16:
    - a. The Lord's second vision pictured a boiling pot that was facing away from the north, preparing to pour its scalding contents toward the south to burn what was in the south, Jeremiah 1:13 ESV.
    - b. When God asked Jeremiah what he saw of this vision, and Jeremiah correctly reported that it involved a boiling pot that was facing away from the north, the Lord explained that from the direction of the north disaster would be let loose on all the inhabitants of Judah, Jeremiah 1:13-14 ESV.
    - c. The Lord explained that He would bring the families of the north, a reference to the Babylonian invasion that would attack from the north, and that He would use them to make war against Jerusalem and the cities of Judah for all of their idolatrous sins of forsaking the Lord and turning to pagan idols, Jeremiah 1:15-16.
    - d. Thus, Jeremiah would be ministering God's Word to the sinful nation of Judah for its great idolatry.
- C. In view of this hard assignment of ministry to an apostate people in the days of the nation's decline, invasion and captivity, God had special instructions for Jeremiah to heed to succeed in his ministry, Jeremiah 1:17-19:
  - 1. First, God told Jeremiah literally to "gird up your loins," to tuck up his outer cloak around his waist so that he could work, and in this context it means, "Dress yourself for work!" (Ibid.; Jeremiah 1:17 ESV)
  - 2. Second, Jeremiah was to say to the people of Judah everything God commanded him to say, Jer. 1:17b.
  - 3. Third, since Jeremiah's audience was composed of apostate people who were not inclined to like what announcements of judgment that God had to say through Jeremiah to them, the Lord warned Jeremiah that he should not be terrified by his hearers, or God in punishment would terrify him before them, Jer. 1:17c.
  - 4. Fourth, God promised Jeremiah that He had made Jeremiah a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land, against Judah's kings, officials, priests and people of the land, Jeremiah 1:18. All of them would fight against Jeremiah, but they would not be able to overcome him, for the Lord Himself (the first person personal pronoun "I" (*any*) in the emphatic position, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 704) would be with Jeremiah to "snatch away" (Hiphil stem of *nasal*, B. D. B., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 664-665) him from them, Jeremiah 1:19.

***Lesson:*** *God taught Jeremiah how He would reveal His Word to him, and that God was watching over His Word to fulfill it. God then said He was sending Jeremiah to announce judgment on Judah, and due to the spiritual hardness of Judah's people, they would fight against him. However, Jeremiah was not to be terrified by them, but to trust God to deliver him from them.*

***Application:*** *In ministering in today's world, may we trust that God will clearly signify His truth to us that we might fearlessly convey it and that He will protect us from spiritually hardened foes as we trust Him to deliver us.*