

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2015: *Jeremiah*
Lesson 1 “The Prophetic Calling of Jeremiah”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 1:19; Jeremiah 7:5–7; 1 Kings 2:26; Jeremiah 1:1–5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 1:6–19; Matthew 28:20.

Memory Text

“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” (Jeremiah 1:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Prophets
- III. Jeremiah’s Family Background
- IV. The Prophetic Calling of Jeremiah
- V. Reluctant Prophets
- VI. The Almond Branch
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

Introduction to Jeremiah

1. The Book

Jeremiah’s book has 52 chapters. How does its volume compare to the size of the other books in the Bible? Did you know that its translation in Greek is significantly shorter than its Hebrew original? Can the information from Jeremiah 36 clarify some textual issues in the Bible?

The overall plan of Jeremiah’s book is not chronological. Do you find this confusing? What are some of the texts from Jeremiah that have parallels elsewhere in the Bible? What is the target country of Jeremiah’s longest recorded oracles?

Literary qualities of Jeremiah cannot always match Isaiah’s masterpiece, yet he used a variety of literary forms (genres). Please share with us your favorite text from Jeremiah.

2. The Person (Jeremiah 1:1-3)

The prophet’s roots go back to the small country of Benjamin. Do you remember the animal associated with this tribe? Which tragic event in Israel’s history took place

during Jeremiah's lifetime? What is known about the kings mentioned in Jeremiah 1:1-3?

Jeremiah's family belonged to the house of Aaron from Levi's tribe. What do we know about his father Hilkiah? Was his family supportive of his prophetic work? What about his lifelong conflict and estrangement from his family? Why did God tell him not to have a family of his own?

His prophetic ministry lasted for several decades. Did he enjoy it? How many times was he sentenced to die? How and where did his life end?

Jeremiah is called a "weeping prophet." Why are these two words mutually exclusive in the minds of some people? Could you proclaim a message that you knew was true to an audience that is not willing to hear the truth? What are some hopeful passages in his book? Did Jeremiah use anything beyond mere words (cf. Jeremiah 28, 32, 51)?

3. Prophetic Call (1:4-10)

Jeremiah was destined to be a prophet even before he was conceived. Did God still respect his freedom of choice? Does God work this way in the life of every human being? Was Jeremiah really a child at the time of his call (12)?

Most persons from the Bible were reluctant to become prophets. What was God's answer to Jeremiah's excuse? What is the meaning of the title "a prophet to the nations"? How can a person's speeches destroy, uproot or build up nations and kingdoms?

4. Prophetic Message (1:11-19)

God's first message came through two short visions of a branch and a boiling pot. What were the lessons to learn? Why did God use Babylon to discipline idolaters? What do the metaphors of a city, a pillar and a wall represent? How much did these promises mean to Jeremiah? What message do they have for us today?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But now, back to the condition of God's own people in the Promised Land. And He makes it plain that even though He's letting them go, He still loves them and is looking forward to the day when He can bring them back. We're down to about 600 B.C. How long has God worked since He brought them out of Egyptian bondage, to this very sad time that He's having to let them go? If we said maybe 1400 to 600 B.C., 800 years! Now, God's only been working with us Adventists for a little over 100 years. He worked with them for over 800 years. Is He meeting with much success? The tribes to the north have gone. Now He's letting the two to the south go. And so we ask our question repeatedly, What is God trying to accomplish? Since He's

infinite in power, why does He seem to be so unable to hold His people? Or can you produce what God wants most by the exercise of power? You know, often we wish we had a little more power to finish the work, as we say. Well, if all it takes is power, why couldn't God do better in Old Testament times? Evidently it takes more than power.

How about God losing one-third of the angels, having at His fingertips all the power of the universe? So there's something more needed. Of course, if we understand what it is God wants, we realize such things are not produced by the exercise of power. And Jeremiah surely discusses what it is God wants with amazing insight under such difficult circumstances! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & Lamentations*, recorded February, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The character of the Christian is shown by his daily life. Said Christ, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17). Our Saviour compares Himself to a vine, of which His followers are the branches. He plainly declares that all who would be His disciples must bring forth fruit; and then He shows how they may become fruitful branches. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). {RC 96.2}

The apostle Paul describes the fruit which the Christian is to bear. He says that it "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). And again, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23). These precious graces are but the principles of God's law carried out in the life. {RC 96.3}

God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth. {GC vi.3}

For forty years Jeremiah was to stand before the nation as a witness for truth and righteousness. In a time of unparalleled apostasy he was to exemplify in life and character the worship of the only true God. During the terrible sieges of Jerusalem he was to be the

mouthpiece of Jehovah. He was to predict the downfall of the house of David and the destruction of the beautiful temple built by Solomon. And when imprisoned because of his fearless utterances, he was still to speak plainly against sin in high places. Despised, hated, rejected of men, he was finally to witness the literal fulfillment of his own prophecies of impending doom, and share in the sorrow and woe that should follow the destruction of the fated city. {PK 408.1}

Yet amid the general ruin into which the nation was rapidly passing, Jeremiah was often permitted to look beyond the distressing scenes of the present to the glorious prospects of the future, when God's people should be ransomed from the land of the enemy and planted again in Zion. He foresaw the time when the Lord would renew His covenant relationship with them. "Their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." Jeremiah 31:12. {PK 408.2}

The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him" (Colossians 2:9, 10). Never will the human heart know happiness until it is submitted to be molded by the Spirit of God. The Spirit conforms the renewed soul to the model, Jesus Christ. Through the influence of the Spirit, enmity against God is changed into faith and love, and pride into humility. The soul perceives the beauty of truth, and Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break out in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {AG 196.4}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway." {HP 188.4}

To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciples, and He will be with us "even unto the end." . . . {HP 188.5}

He finds His faithful ones, and holds communion with them, encouraging and strengthening them. And angels of God, that excel in strength, are sent forth by God to minister to His human workers who are speaking the truth to those who know it not. {HP 188.6}