

A CHARACTER STUDY OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Lesson 3

THE PREACHING PROPHET

Part 1

Jeremiah 1:5

“Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

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Adult Sunday school Class

THE PREACHING PROPHET

“Thus, saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:”

Jeremiah 26:2

God has a job that is to be done by special chosen men. He has called certain men to be preachers of His word. In Ephesians Paul tells us that God *“gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”* (Eph. 4:11-12) In the Old Testament God also touched certain people to be his Prophets. They were to foretell the future but they were also to tell forth His truth as preachers. Jeremiah was one such man. In Chapter one, God called Jeremiah to preach His Word. He said to Jeremiah, *“thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.”* (Jer. 1:7b) There are

several places in the book of Jeremiah where the Lord came to him and told him to go to different people groups to preach God's Word. For instance, in Jeremiah chapter 22 God told Jeremiah to preach to the king of Judah. *"Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."* (Jer. 22:1-3) Again in verse 20 He said, *"Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages:"*. There are many such verses in the book of Jeremiah where God sends the prophet to preach.

One example of God calling Jeremiah to preach an unpopular message is found in the 26th chapter of his prophecy. The first King that Jeremiah ministered under was Josiah. After Josiah passed off the scene, his son,

Jehoiakim became king of Judah. As he was starting his reign, God came to Jeremiah and told him to go to the court of the Temple and preach to the people that had come from all over Judah. His message was simple. If the people would repent of the ungodly way that they had been living, God would have mercy on them and not bring the punishment they deserved. If they did not, He would destroy the Temple and judge the people just as He had judged the people of Shiloh. (1 Sam. 4:10-11) Jeremiah's message was not well received. In fact, the leaders of the people said that he should die for his treasonous words. Jeremiah answered, "*The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore, now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof:*

for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.” (Jer. 26:12-15) The Lord, in his grace and to protect His servant, raised up people who defended the prophet (Vs. 16). He was delivered from those who threatened his life.

The call to serve the Lord is wonderful and sacred. When He calls a man to preach the Lord accompanies that call with a special passage of Scripture. That is to assure him that God has, indeed, called him. This passage gives strength to continue when the ministry is thankless and hard. Many preachers in the world today are persecuted, imprisoned, and even killed for the crime of being God’s man and preaching God’s word. The question arises, why would anyone want to be a preacher? Jeremiah wrestled with this question in chapter 20 of his prophecy. He had been beaten and placed in stocks by Pashur, the chief priest in the Temple. His crime was to preach the truth of God to this priest. Later Jeremiah in a fit of self-pity cried out to the Lord. *“O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision*

daily, everyone mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.” (Vs. 20:7-8) He promised that he would never preach again in the name of the Lord. The message he had preached had cause the people to despise and mock him. However, he found that he could not stop preaching. The power of the Word of God was in him and he had to stand up and preach to the people no matter the consequence. Jeremiah said, *“I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”* (Vs. 9)

When God calls a person to do a work, He gives a peace and satisfaction in the doing of that work. This is especially true of a call to preach. In fact, if a man can do anything other than preach, he should go do it, because God has not called you to preach. Like Jeremiah, the fire shut up in your bones will weary you and cause you to be very unsatisfied and unhappy until you act in obedience to the call of God.

Jeremiah's conclusion, *"But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore, my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers."* (Vs.20:11-13)

Wycliffe - The Wycliffe Bible Commentary. By Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison. Moody Press, Chicago, Il. 1962.

ISBY - The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. By James Orr. Vol III. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1956

Henry - Matthew Henry - A commentary on the Whole Bible. By Matthew Henry. Fleming H. Revell Co. Old Tappan, New Jersey. Vol. I

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