

Jeremiah 1:11-19 – An Almond Branch and a Boiling Pot

Trapp, Gray, TSK, Poole, Clarke, HebrewLexicon, Geneva, JFB, Delitzsch, Young, Barnes, Henry, Calvin, INT, Armstrong
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet**. But he wasn't reluctant because he was lazy. **He was reluctant because he believed the Jews would not listen to him** and they **would try to kill him** for what he was going to say. He feared the rejection and the physical harm he would receive for giving God's message! **So God addressed his concerns**, promising to always be with him, and telling him how important his message was to his fellow Jews. **Jeremiah decided to obey**.

God then gave him the first message. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Jeremiah had to see the vicious enemy coming

Jeremiah had to hear the reason the enemy was coming

Jeremiah had to prepare to speak of the enemy's coming

Our goals are: **That you will become aware of the church's sins today and be prepared to speak up so she repents and she doesn't bring more shame to her Redeemer**.

Jeremiah had to see the vicious enemy coming

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a **branch of an almond tree**." 12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have **seen well**, for I am **ready to perform** My word."

1. God showed Jeremiah an almond rod ("branch" is not the best translation here).

What is the historical significance of this almond rod?

When there was grumbling and distrust among the Israelite as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan in 1446BC, God specifically chose Aaron to be priest and confirmed it by causing Aaron's almond rod to bud.

Numbers 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, **the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.**

So the fact Jeremiah "saw well" (correctly) was confirmation **he was the chosen prophet of God, not the other false prophets.**

This must have been a wonderful assurance to one who thought he was not qualified to speak.

13 And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north."

2. Sometime after seeing the almond rod of confirmation, God spoke to Jeremiah again, and showed him a boiling pot.

Ezekiel 11:3 "who say, 'The time is not near to build houses; **this city is the caldron**, and we are the meat.'

The picture is clear. Jerusalem, with its high walls, seemed like a cauldron, a large pot. This pot was facing the north! The **Jews were the meat** that was going to be put in it!

14 Then the LORD said to me: "Out of the north calamity shall break forth on all the inhabitants of the land.

3. The fire of Babylon was coming to boil the Jews in the big hot pot!

The Jews would become less and less-just what happens to water under fire!

There was nothing unclear about God's speech!

God himself would call the army from the North, the Babylonians, and they would come with **great force** (break forth).

God had had enough of his rebellious people and they were going to be boiled alive by the Babylonians.

15 For behold, I am calling All the **families of the kingdoms** of the north," says the LORD; "They shall come and **each one set his throne At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem**, Against all its walls all around, And against **all the cities of Judah**.

God would engage nations to support Babylon (families of the kingdoms) to come and join in Judah's punishment.

This large army would then settle in Jerusalem, fully ruling God's people.

And to show they had authority, they would set up their thrones at the "gates of the city"—where court was held!

This army would light fires for the Jerusalem pot – roasting the people like meat—just like Micah had said before the northern 10 ½ tribes of Israel were burned in the Assyrian fire!

Micah 3:3 Who also eat the flesh of My people, Flay their skin from them, Break their bones, And **chop them in pieces Like meat for the pot, Like flesh in the caldron.**"

(Jerusalem was representative of all Judah's cities!)

God would show he was the one controlling this judgment and he confirmed the Babylonians would do **his bidding!**

Jeremiah 25:9 'behold, **I will send and take all the families of the north,** says the LORD, 'and **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon**, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its

inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.

4. Lessons:

a. God will not ignore sins, even if it is found among the people he loves. God will not ignore sins *especially among the people he loves*. Because the church knows better, her sins are greater.

b. Identify the danger the church is in. Think of today! Has worship been compromised? Has leadership become weak? Is discipline lacking? In Reformed churches we may answer, “We aren’t too bad in these areas.” But I ask, “**Are we doing evangelism, do we welcome the newcomer, and do we care for the poor?**” And what is your **duty to those churches that have compromised worship, that have weak, unqualified leadership, or that have lacking discipline?** Are you **bold enough to challenge others?** Don’t be **afraid of losing a friendship...losing a job...or losing your life!** Christ’s glory is at stake.

c. “Why can’t we all get along,” is not a moral principle. Speaking truth to challenge corruption is a moral principle.

d. Though God ordained the actions of all nations, God will hold all nations accountable for every sin they commit. Those who say the church is not under God’s rule are, by default, excusing sins. The church and the state have one King! You will see the bad things God did to the Babylonians through Cyrus the Great.

e. There is always hope, no matter how far the church has strayed from her Savior; he will bring her back.

Ezekiel 11:7 ‘Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they are the meat, and this city is the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it.

God’s love is immense, but the primary ground for rescuing Judah is because **the church exists for the glory of God!**

Jeremiah had to hear the reason the enemy was coming

16 I will utter My **judgments Against them** concerning all their wickedness, Because they have **forsaken Me, Burned incense to other gods, And worshiped the works of their own hands.**

1. God made clear the reasons for putting his people in the boiling pot on the fire.

a The Jews had forsaken God and worshipped other gods.

God hates all other gods. He wants no other gods before his face.

God hates all other gods, especially those made by man’s own hands. Imagine the creature making his creator!

b. God highlighted the most egregious of sins the Jews committed (there were many others as you will see)– all linked to having and worshipping false gods.

Because they worshipped false gods, **they ignored the Sabbath.** One of their gods was wealth so working on the Sabbath was common. He was a prominent god.

Because they worshipped false gods, they **didn’t have to meet the rigorous demands of God’s law** and treat all men with respect, so they abused the widows, orphans, and foreigners.

And remember, some of these idols were not in the traditional form of idols, but in the form of **wealth, houses, and influence.**

2. Lessons:

a. Jeremiah was not to whisper the sins of the people...but speak loudly and clearly! And so must you do. If sins are exposed, confronted, and repented of, the church will become strong and thrive again. And please don’t hide behind being Reformed. You are **part of the whole church of Christ.** The fact that, “**They believe in Jesus,**” is **not sufficient justification for not confronting their sins!**

b. Jeremiah had to confront all kinds of people, including the king, as he did to Jehoiakim, the prophets and the priests! And so must you! Don’t complain to each other how bad the Prime Minister, or the Premier, or the mayor is! Tell them. Call them to repentance. Confront you husband if he is living in sin! Confront your parents if they are urging you to compromise. Confront your elders if they aren’t doing their job.

c. Love for the worship of Christ – which brings him honor, must motivate you to do this!

Jeremiah had to prepare to speak of the enemy coming

17 “Therefore **prepare yourself and arise,** And speak to them **all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces,** Lest I dismay you before them.

1. God then told Jeremiah to prepare to go out and speak to the Jews of the imminent danger they were facing.

“Prepare” has the idea of tying up his robes so he could get to work!

And as he went out, Jeremiah was to say everything God said and not hold back the details. Even if Jewish feelings were hurt, he still had to speak.

And as he went out, Jeremiah was not to be afraid of the Jews. If he did, God was going to shame him!

18 For behold, **I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls** against the

whole land — Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. **19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,**" says the LORD, **"to deliver you."**

2. God then encouraged Jeremiah (again) to go out and speak these harsh words to his people.

God encouraged him by **making him like a fortified city, and iron pillar, and bronze walls.**

2 Timothy 4:17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the **Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom....**

God wanted Jeremiah's forehead to be harder than flint (as Ezekiel's) to stand up and speak his truth against the Jews.

3. God was in fact letting Jeremiah know he was going to face serious opposition.

God **did not hide the truth from Jeremiah.** The **kings, the princes (high officials), and the priests would oppose him.**

Even the **people of the land would oppose him.**

4. God assured him (as he did to others) the Jewish people would not be able to prevail against him as God would sustain and protect him.

5. Lessons:

a. Expect troubles when you speak God's truth to a corrupt church and a coercive state. Losing a job, being put out of school, not being allowed to go into Costco, or denied the right to go on a plane is nothing!

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Remember Jeremiah's own language. He knew what was ahead!

Jeremiah 20:11 But the LORD is with me as a mighty, awesome One. **Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper...**

b. The message to God's is: Be brave and do my work. The enemy is limited by God. As long as God wants an enemy checked, he can't move forward.

Isaiah 54:17 **No weapon formed against you shall prosper,** And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants...

c. Ultimately, this proclamation of truth, and a call to repentance, is what Jesus did! He came and boldly spoke truth and then boldly went to the cross to take God's punishment for those who would repent.

Isaiah 50:7 "For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

And this is what you are called to do. Proclaim truth. Be ready to be shamed, fired, or killed for doing so.

Conclusion:

The Babylonians were coming to bring God's judgment on Jerusalem. Jeremiah had to be man enough to speak exactly as God said so the Jews would be warned, repent, and be restored to Yahweh.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord:

1. The kingdom needs people who are bold and willing to speak God's truth. Speak up generally as a husband, wife, friend, neighbor, or Christian brother to each other. Speak up specially as ministers and elders prophetically to the church and the state.

2. It is true you don't see many churches worshipping literal idols –but the church worships more dangerous subtle idols – and judgment is coming. What are some examples? Churches are now about **the felt needs of the people**. Churches are about **organizational strength** and keeping people in at all costs. **Churches are now about health**. Churches are about **getting along** with each other! (Much politeness is idolatrous.)

3. To avoid idolatry, the church must be pointed back to the cross and remember whose she is and for what purpose she was saved. If seeing the cross doesn't humble and change her, she has not been changed inwardly!

Finally: It wasn't the goodness or the innocent nature of the Babylonians that God used them. In fact, because they had no faith in Jesus, they were destroyed. And so will you, if you have no faith in Jesus. Do you want faith? Ask. God gives faith for free.