

Jeremiah Chapter One

Year: 627 BC

1:1

Information here:

1. Personal information about Jeremiah

- a. Name: Jeremiah. A common name in OT. Daved had two mighty men named Jeremiah (1 Chr. 12:4, 10, 13). One of the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35: was named Jeremiah and King Zedekiah's grandfather was Jeremiah (Jer.52:1; 2 Kg.24:18)
- b. Family
 - i. Father was a priest named Hilkiah. In 622 a priest named Hilkiah found the "book of the law" in the temple (2 Kings 22:8), but if it was Jeremiah's father we think it would have mentioned that fact.
 - ii. Jeremiah's family descended from Abiathar who was David's priest who traveled with David and carried the Ark (1 Kings 2:26) who was deposed to his hometown of Anathoth around 962 BC because he sided with Adonijah in his attempt to take David's throne (1 Kings 1:5-19; 2:26-27). Abiathar was replaced by Solomon replaced with Zadok. Abiathar would have had family connections with Eli from the days of Samuel (1 Sam. 14:3; 22:20) and the Ark's presence in Shiloh which Jeremiah's father surely would have explained to Jeremiah (Jer. 7:14; 26:6). This would make Jeremiah a descendent of Eli.
 - iii. Priests originally guarded and served in the holy sites. By 600 BC the priests were entrusted with the teaching ministry of the Torah, traditions and purity regulations. Jeremiah constant complaint was that the priest had been neglecting this duty of teaching.
- c. Status
- d. Hometown – Anathoth, land of Benjamin, close to today's Arab village of Anata. It was a Levitical city (Josh.21:18). Anathoth sets 3 miles NE of Jerusalem in the hill country in the central plateau which means the northern walls of Jerusalem and much of the city itself could be seen from Jeremiah's hometown where he grew up. So, Jeremiah's walk to Jerusalem would be about a hour up and over hills leading into the city. It seems that the name Anathoth is a Canaanite name from their goddess Anat. Its population may have never been more than about 100 people. (Ancient cities did not have the population modern towns and cities have.)

2. Source of Jeremiah's messages

3. Time period of Jeremiah's ministry 627 BC (thirteenth year of Josiah) until 587 (deportation)

1:2-3

Jeremiah spoke the word that Yahweh gave him. Jeremiah was not a philosopher or a theologian or a politician. Jeremiah stood in the council of God and spoke his word (Jer. 23:18, 22)

Jeremiah's actual life and ministry continued after the fall of Jerusalem and on into a time in Egypt where he continued to prophesy to the people of Judah (Jr. 42-44)

1:4

The phrase "The word of Yahweh came to me" in 4, 11 and 13 would seem to indicate three separate occasions for these encounters with the Lord.

The phrase "the word of the Lord came" is found 123 times in the OT.

These may have been the opening words of the scroll to Jehoiakim that was burnt and rewritten.

Jeremiah 25:1-13 may then have been the end of that original scroll recorded in Jehoiakim's 4th year in 605 B.C. when Daniel was taken in the first captivity. Jeremiah 25:13 would have been pertinent to Daniel's counting of the years and part of the reason he began praying in 539-538 in Daniel chapter 9:1-4.

"Word" as in "the Word of Yahweh" is "dabar" in Hebrew and means "word," "thing," "action," because in Hebrew a "word" and an "event" are within the same process. They are the same experience. You can't have one without the other.

1:5

"formed" is "ysr" and is found in Gen. 2:7 and for the work of the potter in Jer. 18:2-4.

"appointed" is literally "I gave you" and has the meaning of "I appointed" or "I set". Jeremiah had been "given" to the role of a prophet.

It is interesting to understand how clearly Jeremiah heard and understood his call. It is similar to Isaiah and Ezekiel in the sense that there was an actual point in time and an actual event where they received their call. It was not an emotion, or an impression, etc. It was a dialog.

Three words:

1. "know" is "yada" meant more than to have knowledge of some thing or some information. It included personal commitment such as:
 - a. Marriage of a man and woman – Adam and Eve in Gen. 4:1
 - b. The Lord's relation and commitment to Israel – "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," in Amos 3:2
 - c. No knowledge of God in Israel in Hosea 4:1
 - d. Knowledge of the Lord is more important than burnt offerings in Hosea 6:6
2. "set apart" is "hiqdis" with the root "qds" which means "separated" or "set apart" for sacred purpose. This means it is not to be used for any other purpose. "hiqdis" is the Hiphil which is the causative meaning "to cause someone/something to be set apart." Which means this is translated as "consecrated" or "dedicated." Jeremiah had been set apart for a special purpose.
3. "appoint" is "ntn" means to assign to a specific job or mission. Jeremiah's was to be a prophet to the nations, not just to Judah.

Obviously these three words presented an enormous task which no serious minded teenager or twenty year old could imagine themselves accomplishing (consider the assignment did not only include Judah, or maybe neighboring Edom, but also Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, etc)...at least, not without divine assistance for every portion.

1:6

"I don't know how to speak" is a reference to not having training in rhetoric, public speaking, etc. which the leaders of nations would be used to hearing the most eloquent of all speakers.

"boy" is "na'ar" which normally refers to boys and youth. This word is used in these ways in the OT:

1. "baby" in Ex.2:6
2. "child" in 1 Sam.1:24
3. "young man" in Gen.37:2
4. "warrior" in 2 Sam.2:14

5. A 40+ year old in Ex.3:11

Jeremiah hesitates because:

- a. Untrained
- b. Lacks experience

Moses claimed to be slow of speech.

Isaiah claimed to be unclean, sinful and so unworthy

Jeremiah claimed lack of training and experience.

It is hard to imagine that this call came to an individual who had little or corrupt training in the revealed Law or Word of God. We would imagine that some very basic theologies and insights into current political affairs were part of Jeremiah's home and upbringing.

1:7

"to **everyone** to whom I send you" since the prepositions "al" and "'el" are interchanged in the book of Jeremiah it can also say "to **whatever place** I send you."

Yahweh would give Jeremiah the message (Deut. 18:18)

Jeremiah would stick to this formula and not alter or deviate from the presenting the Word he was given...and, face the consequence as in 37:16-17 and 38:14-18.

1:8

God comforts Jeremiah with a promise of constant supervision, protection and rescue.

But, that does not mean there will not be impossible times, painful rejection, social embarrassment, physical damage and near death experiences that will ultimately end in death at some point.

Jeremiah doubted this assurance at times as in 20:7-18

"Declares the Lord" is from a word translated "to whisper" which may indicate a private hearing of what the Lord has just spoken in the sense that it is shared privately, intimately or as a secret. This phrase is found:

1. 176 times in Jeremiah
2. 83 times in Ezekiel
3. 23 times in Isaiah
4. 21 times in Amos
5. 20 times in Zechariah
6. 11 times in Haggai
7. Otherwise it is no found very often in the rest of the OT.

1:9

Touching his mouth was similar to Dt.18:18, "I will put my words in your mouth."

Isaiah had his lips touched in Isaiah 6:6-7

Ezekiel had Yahweh's words place in his mouth in Ezekiel 2:9-3:3

Also, see Moses call in Ex.3:1-4:17 and Samuel in First Sam. 3:1-21 and Gideon in Judges 6

The call of these prophets was recorded in a more simple fashion:

Elisha (1 Kings.19:19-21; Jonah (Jonah 1:1-2; Amos (Amos 7:14-15) Hosea (Hosea 1:2)

1:10

Jeremiah's ministry was specifically directed at the nations and kingdoms of the world. Jeremiah's ministry is twofold:

1. Judgment
 - a. To uproot
 - b. To tear down
 - c. To destroy
 - d. To overthrow
2. Fresh Start
 - e. To build – Jeremiah also spoke of restoration of Judah. And, the rise of new nations to new levels of power and authority occurred before Jeremiah's eyes.
 - f. To plant

God would have to purge and purify the land from idols, immorality and false ideologies before he could rebuild on his eternal Truth.

Similar listing of verbs in:

- a. 12:14-17 – I will uproot them...but after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance.”
- b. 18:7-9 – “If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed...if at another time I announce that a nation of kingdom is to be built up and planted, an if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”
- c. 24:6 – concerning the figs of the 597 captivity...”My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them.”
- d. 31:28 – “Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant.”

Two Visions:

1:11-12

These visions are to encourage and direct Jeremiah's ministry:

Vision One: a branch of an almond tree.

The almond was the first budding tree in the spring. Even today Anathoth area is the center for almond trees and travelers in the spring can see the area full of almond buds. The point is not that the almond tree was budding, but that it was being WATCHED.

Note the play on the Hebrew words for “almond tree” and “he gave Jeremiah to bring it to fruition first and quickly like the almond branch watching” – “SAQED” and “SOQED”

This seems to mean that God is watching the Word that

1:13-14

Vision Two: Jeremiah sees another image which is also going carry with it word pictures with specific meaning. A large cauldron boiling and burning with fire. Literally it says, “a cauldron blown upon” which indicates there was a breeze fanning the flames to an extreme temperature. It was ready to fall towards the south which meant disaster was coming from the north. Many foreign powers came from the north. These powers were from strange, unknown lands.

1:15-16

Judgment was coming in the form of foreign occupation and destruction for having worshipped foreign gods. The Babylonian army officers would come and sit in the Middle Gate of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 39:3. The kings, leaders and officials would sit in the gates on benches that have been excavated and carry out business there. Even court cases and legal transactions took place in the city gates.

1:17

Jeremiah's commission includes three commands which combined commands, warnings and promises:

1. "Get yourself ready" – from the idiom "gird up your loins: which comes from the need to tie the long robe around the waist in order to work or run feely. This is seen in 1 Kings.18:46 and 2 Kings 4:29.
2. "Stand up and Say to them whatever I command you" –
3. "Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them" – "terrify" is literally "to shatter" or "to break in pieces." According to translators and commentators God is sayings:
 - a. "Trust me and do not let the people "shatter" you , or else I will "shatter" you myself!
 - b. "Don't lose your nerve, or I will shatter your nerve" (J. Bright)
 - c. "Do not let your spirit break at sight of them, or I will break you." (NEB)
 - d. "Do not be panicked, or I will give you something to fear!"
 - e. "Do not break down, or I will break you!" (NRSV)

1:18

Jeremiah is given promises:

1. I have made you a fortified city – Jeremiah would be like a walled city that could not be broken into. Although Jerusalem's walls would fall, Jeremiah's walls would stand firm.
2. I have made you an iron pillar
3. I have made you a bronze wall to stand against the whole land
 - a. To stand against the kings of Judah
 - b. To stand against the officials of Judah
 - c. To stand against the priests of Judah
 - d. To stand against the people of Judah

These same images and metaphors such as "bronze wall and iron pillar are used by Thutmose the III to describe himself to present the appearance of being undefeatable.

1:19

1. They will fight you
2. They will not overcome you
3. I am with you
4. I will rescue you

In **Jeremiah 15:10-21** (603 BC) we can hear Jeremiah's utter disillusionment with his ministry. It would seem that Jeremiah did not fully understand how ineffective and inefficient his contemporary ministry was going to be. Also, **Habakkuk 1:1-2:3 and 3:16-19** which is dated right before or after the 605 Battle at Carchemish (or, 603, the same time as Jeremiah 15).