

God Calls Jeremiah

Key Verse: *“Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.”*
—*Jeremiah 1:8*

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 1:1-10

ALL OF GOD’S HOLY PROPHETS displayed the essential character trait of humility. In this humility, each tended to have a sense of their own lack of ability and unworthiness. When called at a young age by God, Jeremiah responded, saying, “Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.”

(Jer. 1:6) However, God makes no mistakes of who he calls. As we have seen in our previous lessons, Moses was reassured in his doubt by the angel of the Lord speaking from a burning bush, and Isaiah, likewise, was encouraged by the words and actions of the seraphim.

In the case of Jeremiah, God spoke to him more directly. He said, “Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.” The reassuring words of our Key Verse were then spoken by the Lord, following which, Jeremiah records, “The LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.”—vss. 7-9

Evidently God felt it necessary to reassure Jeremiah personally because of the severity of the message he was to deliver. Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the “weeping prophet” because of the distress he felt as he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. In addition, mocking and persecution caused him to have doubts about fulfilling his mission, but his loyalty

to God overcame his weakness. On one occasion he testified, “I will not make mention of him [the LORD], 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.”—Jer. 20:9

Jeremiah’s resolve should be an example for us in our weakest moments. “Trial hath not taken you, save such as man can bear; faithful, moreover is God, who will not suffer you to be tried above what ye are able, but will make, with the trial, also the way of escape.” (I Cor. 10:13, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) Jeremiah’s fervent belief in God’s words is similar to that of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as they listened to the resurrected Jesus, and later recalled, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”—Luke 24:32

Jeremiah’s prophecy should have led the people of Israel to self-examination and a return to loyalty to God. The actual effect, however, was hostility. In response to his prophecy, the priests led the people in an angry attack upon the prophet. He was arrested and charged with speaking evil of his city in declaring its forthcoming destruction. (Jer. 26:8-11) Such was the foolishness of the Jewish priests. Could merely Jeremiah’s declarations bring things to pass? Furthermore, if he was truly God’s prophet, could their assault on him turn aside the divine purpose? Surely, the spirit of sin is not that of a sound mind, as is the Spirit of the Lord.

It is noteworthy that it was the priests and false prophets of Israel who called for the death of God’s true prophet. The Scriptures, as well as history, tell us this has frequently been the case. Nearly all the persecutions of Jesus, his apostles, and consecrated followers throughout the Gospel Age, have come from professed servants of God. Let us keep the courage and zeal of God’s faithful servants in mind as he calls us to witness the truth to the world.—Matt. 24:14 ■