

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. In other words, 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:

See the vicious enemy coming

Hear the reason the enemy was coming

Speak of the enemy's coming

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

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).

Most translations: Rod! 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 Jeremiah was the chosen prophet of God, not the other false prophets.

What 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.

The picture is clear. Jerusalem, with its high walls, seemed like a cauldron, a large pot. This pot was facing away from the north! She was running!!!
God's bride was the meat that was going to be put in it!
Ezekiel 11:3 ...this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.'

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 God's bride in the big hot pot!

She 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).

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 boil Judah.

This large army would then settle in Jerusalem and rule God's bride.

And to show they had authority, these nations 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 bride like meat – just like Micah had said before the northern 10 ½ tribes were burned in 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: 5

a. God will not ignore sins, even if it is found among the bride he loves. God will not ignore sins *especially among the bride 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 you don't live in bubble. So 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 other Christians?

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!

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 bride in the boiling pot on the fire.

a The bride 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 his bride had committed (there were many others as you will see)– **all linked to having and worshipping false gods.**

She loved money...she the Sabbath became a victim of her idolatry...and being cruel to widows, orphans, and foreigners became the order of the day!

So she worshipped false gods with no standard, she **didn't have to meet the rigorous demands of God's law** and treat all men with respect, so **she abused the widows, orphans, and foreigners.**

2. Lessons: 3

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, "**Those other Christians 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 church leaders if they aren't doing their job.

c. Love for the worship of Christ – which brings him honor, must motivate you to do this! The **church is about the glory of God**...it is **not about getting along!**

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! Expect more!
But don't fear those who can only kill the body!

Remember Jeremiah's own language. He knew what was ahead and wanted them to prepare for it!

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 speak. The enemy is limited by God.

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 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 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 God's bride. Jeremiah had to be man enough to speak exactly as God said so his bride 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 to save it from crumbling.

Speak up generally as a husband, wife, friend, neighbor, or Christian brother to each other so the church is revived. Yes, confront sins!

Speak up specially as ministers and elders prophetically to the church and the state so the church is protected. Confront sins!

2. Let's focus on the church for a minute. What are some examples of modern-day idols in churches?

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.

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.

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