

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 41: "I Have Made Thee This Day ... an Iron Pillar," (Jeremiah 1–2; 15; 20; 26; 36–38)

Introduction



17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

—Jeremiah 1:17-19

The phrases in verse 18 were used by the Lord to describe Jeremiah as he set out to fulfill an assignment from the Lord. Kings, princes, priests, and all the people of the land opposed Jeremiah in his mission, but he valiantly did as the Lord commanded. Jeremiah was an "iron pillar" who had great strength in times of adversity and did not bend or break.

This lesson should encourage each of us to remain faithful in times of opposition and adversity.

Background: Jeremiah ministered during the reigns of five kings, from Josiah to Zedekiah (626 to 586 B.C.). With Josiah, he tried to turn the people from idolatry and immorality. But the kings after

Josiah ruled in wickedness, and the people were in total apostasy. Jeremiah's mission was to raise a voice of warning to these people, and his denunciations of their wickedness are among the

strongest in all scripture. His was one of the last voices of warning before the Babylonians conquered Judah. Jeremiah's life was full of sorrow, but his response to trial can teach and inspire us.

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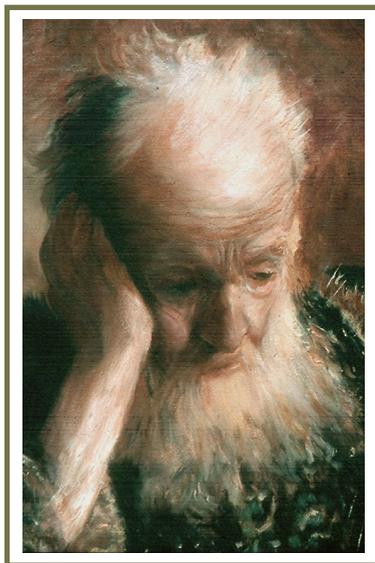
Lesson Highlights

- Jeremiah is called of God to be a prophet.
- Many people oppose Jeremiah and try to prevent him from fulfilling his mission.
- Jeremiah is strengthened in adversity by his love for the word of God.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to remain faithful in times of opposition and adversity.

Next Week

#42 "I Will Write It in Their Hearts" (Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31)



The Prophet Jeremiah
Andra Cohn

Brother Duane S. Crowther:

"Jeremiah was probably a descendant of the priestly line, and his forefathers apparently were from Israel rather than Judah. Unlike Zephaniah, Jeremiah had no political connections and was not influential in the affairs of the royal court during Josiah's time. Like Zephaniah, Jeremiah was a young man in the days of Josiah. The recorded ministry of Jeremiah extended over fifty years and during the reign of five kings of Judah. Jeremiah was of an introspective and emotional temperament." (Prophets & Prophecies of The Old Testament, p437)

He was beaten and imprisoned for prophesying against the kingdom of Judah. His life was constantly threatened. But through all the adversity and opposition, Jeremiah was like an "iron pillar" (Jeremiah 1:18).

The book of Jeremiah provides a personal, faith-promoting record of the prophet's response to his life's sorrow and frustration.

Jeremiah is called of God to be a prophet. (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

Jeremiah 1:5 - Jeremiah's call as a prophet unto the nations teaches us that the doctrine of foreordination is exemplified in his life and service. As we review today's scriptures, consider his foreordination and see if you think it helped Jeremiah to know that in the premortal existence he had been fore-ordained to be a prophet.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was" (History of the Church, 6:364).

Jeremiah 1:6-10 - When Jeremiah felt inadequate to fulfill his calling, the Lord

spoke reassuringly to him and touched his mouth, giving Jeremiah the Lord's words to speak.

When we have felt inadequate in a calling or assignment, the Lord has also strengthened us if we were simply willing to follow his instructions and be obedient. He supports his servants.

Many people oppose Jeremiah and try to prevent him from fulfilling his mission.

Jeremiah faced opposition as he fulfilled the mission given to him by the Lord:

- **Jeremiah 20:1-6** - Displeased with Jeremiah's prophecies, Pashur, the chief governor of the temple, had Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks. Jeremiah prophesied that Pashur, his family, and his friends would be taken captive by the Babylonians and would die in Babylon.
- **Jeremiah 26:7-15** - Most of the people in the land, including the priests, opposed Jeremiah and his message. However, Jeremiah courageously delivered the message the Lord had commanded him to give. **Jeremiah 11:19-21; 12:6** - Jeremiah was even opposed and hated by his relatives and his neighbors in the city of Anathoth.
- **Jeremiah 36:1-6, 20-32**. The words of Jeremiah's prophecies were written down and read to the people. The king burned these words, and the Lord commanded Jeremiah to record them again.

• **Jeremiah 37:12-15; Jeremiah 38:4-13.**

Jeremiah was accused unjustly and put into prison. He was later cast into a dungeon, where he sank into the mire. By order of King Zedekiah, Jeremiah was released from the dungeon and put back in prison.

Jeremiah 20:14-18 reveals how Jeremiah felt as he endured such overwhelming opposition. Obviously, he was somewhat discouraged at this time.

Jeremiah 26:12-15 - To help us when we experience adversity, we can learn from Jeremiah that he continued to obey the Lord and fulfill his calling even when he was persecuted and discouraged.

Jeremiah 2:13 - The Lord said his people had committed two evils. They had forsaken him, the fountain of living waters. And they had made for themselves broken cisterns that could not hold the Lord's living water, meaning they had sought fulfillment and security in worldly things.

People described with these characteristics would have great difficulty accepting the words of Jeremiah because they were not spiritually attuned to the message. They would, therefore, be unable to respond to adversity as Jeremiah did with faith and continued diligence.

Elder Marion D. Hanks said: "*Material objectives consume too much of our attention. The struggle for what we need or for more than we need exhausts our time and energy. We pursue pleasure or entertainment, or become overinvolved in associations or civic matters. Of course, people need recreation, need to be achieving, need to contribute; but if these come at the cost of friendship with Christ, the price is much too high. 'For my people have committed two evils,' said the Lord to Israel; 'they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'* (Jer. 2:13.) *The substitutions we fashion to take the place of God in our lives truly hold no water. To the measure*

The Millennium will be a time of peace and joy.

we thus refuse the 'living water,' we miss the joy we could have" (Ensign, July 1972, 105).

Jeremiah's prophecies that the Babylonians would destroy Jerusalem were fulfilled, as recorded in chapters 39-40 of Jeremiah. Jeremiah had been in

prison during the siege, but afterward the Babylonians freed him and allowed him and a remnant of the Jews to remain in the land of Judah.

Jeremiah 42:1-6 - Johanan, the leader of those who remained, asked Jeremiah to seek the Lord's will for them and promised to obey it.

Jeremiah 42:9-22 - Through Jeremiah the Lord told the people to stay in the land of Judah and promised to bless them if they would do so.

Jeremiah 43-44 - But Johanan led the people into Egypt,, where most of them continued in their wickedness.

Jeremiah is strengthened in adversity by his love for the word of God.

The following scriptures show how the word of God helped Jeremiah remain strong in times of adversity.

Jeremiah 1:9 - The Lord put his words into Jeremiah's mouth.

Jeremiah 15:16 - Jeremiah ate the words of the Lord, which is poetic language meaning that the word of

God became part of him. We can "eat" the words of the Lord as Jeremiah did by studying the scriptures and the counsel of latter-day prophets.

2 Nephi 32:3 - The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi counseled us to "feast upon the words of Christ".

Jeremiah 20:9 - Jeremiah described the word of the Lord inside him as a "burning fire" in his bones.

Jeremiah could not, therefore, hold back from teaching the word of the Lord because it was so strong within him.

Conclusion

Jeremiah lived in a time of great wickedness. He was called to preach the gospel of repentance and though it was not easy, he was strengthened by the Lord and fulfilled his mission. We also live in a time of great wickedness. Living in the world exposes us to the carnal desires of man and they are made to look attractive. We must be careful not to get caught up in the ways of the world and "hew" out "broken cisterns." One way to do this, to keep our lives Divinely centered, is by eating or feasting upon the words of the Lord through prayerful, meditative scripture study on a daily basis. If we do this, like Jeremiah, we will be able to endure adversity and fulfill our missions.

Additional Teaching

"Clay ... in the potter's hand" (Jeremiah 18:6)

Jeremiah's visit to the potter is recorded in **Jeremiah 18:1-4**.

Jeremiah 18:5-10 - The Lord taught his people through Jeremiah's experience that if they would repent, he would mold them into something better, just as the potter had reshaped the marred vessel. He also reminded them that he had the power to destroy them if they did not repent.

This comparison applies to us today in that we can become better clay in the Lord's hands by being humble—by

obeying, repenting, trusting the Lord, and seeking his will.

President Heber C. Kimball provided the following insights into the comparison in **Jeremiah 18:1-10**: *"All [who] are pliable in the hands of God and are obedient to His commands, are vessels of honor, and God will receive them"* (History of the Church, 4:478).

"There are many vessels that are destroyed after they have been moulded and shaped. Why? Because they are not contented with the shape the potter has given them, but straightaway put themselves

into a shape to please themselves; therefore they are beyond understanding what God designs, and they destroy themselves by the power of their own agency. [These people] have to go through a great many modellings and shapes, then ... have to be glazed and burned; and even in the burning, some vessels crack" (in Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer [1981], 270).

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."

—Jeremiah 15:16

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Record your thoughts on the life of Jeremiah. How can the lessons from his life strengthen you, particularly in times of adversity?