

## Jeremiah

### Objectives

- Life and struggle of Jeremiah the prophet
- Overview of his writings

### References

- <http://st-takla.org/pub/Bible-Interpretations>
- Interpretation of the Old Testament by Father Antonius Fekry
- Interpretation of the Old Testament by Father Tadros Malaty
- Introduction to the Book of Jeremiah By father Antonius Fahmy

### Scriptural Verse

- “Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.” (Jeremiah 1:7)

### Lesson Guidelines

#### Jeremiah's life

- Born in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC from a priesthood family
- Consecrated from the womb and was called as a youth for struggle and defeat (1: 4-10)
- Wanted to quit as Moses, feeling that he is not worthy, but God touched his mouth and granted him His word with authority to defeat nations and kingdoms (1:9)
- He did not see a vision but was talking to God as a very dear friend (1:4) and served as a symbol for the Lord Jesus Christ in His life, His sufferings and His love for people
- He started his service 60 years after Isaiah the prophet and 5 years after the great reform mentioned in (2 Kings 23), so he urged the people to repair their hearts and not to be content with repairing the temple
- He lived a celibate as God ordered him not to marry or to have kids to bury him (16:1-4) to symbolize the non buried dead of his people and the loss of joy
- Was called the “Weeping Prophet” due to his continuous flowing tears, “Job of the prophets” due to his great sufferings and tribulations. He was also called the prophet with broken heart as his heavy mission broke his heart (9:1) and the word of God was in his bones as a burning fire (20:9)
- Due to his courage in telling the truth of God, he was rejected and hated by his people (11: 18-21) and was betrayed by his brothers (12:6)
- Imprisoned as a traitor as his prophesies were considered as breaking to the power and self esteem of the army (37:13). Accordingly, his family denied him
- He was beaten and put in the stocks (20:1), threatened by death (26:8), and put into a dungeon to die (38:6). However, an Ethiopian slave got an order from the king and pulled him up and he stayed in a prison till the fall of Jerusalem
- Some of his prophesies were burned (36:23) and he was bound in chains (40:1)

- He prophesied about the victory of Babel so the king of Babel freed him and gave him the choice to live in Babel or Judea (40:1-6). He preferred to stay to serve his people whom he loved despite of their hatred to him (39:11-14)
- Jeremiah urged the people not to go to Egypt so they carried him unwillingly there with them where he wrote his last prophesies and was stoned there (Tradition)
- He survived 3 stages of Captivity
  - In the days of Daniel and the three young men (Dan 1:1)
  - In the days of Ezekiel and Mordecai (2 Kings 24:8)
  - In the days of the siege of Jerusalem (35: 5-7)

Note that in the 4<sup>th</sup> captivity, they burned the house of the Lord and broke the walls of the city and the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month became a day of sorrow for the fall of Jerusalem

### **Jeremiah's writings**

- Jeremiah is a major prophet and wrote two books in the Holy Bible; The Book of Jeremiah (52 Chapters) and the Book of Lamentations (5 Chapters)
- The New Testament referred 41 times to Jeremiah and his writings (e.g., Matthew 2:17, 21:13)
- Jeremiah wrote about the New Testament as the source of comfort and hope (Hebrews 10:16)

His Book is full of questions that were answered in the New Testament (see verses 5:7 and 8:22); it is called the Book of reform and the Book of Lamentations and persecutions. It is also full of symbols and prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ (23:5-6).

### **The theme of his writings**

- The need of repentance and returning back to God
- The need to repair the inner heart
- God is the Author of the history, and works for the benefit of humanity
- God betrothed Israel (Old Testament) but the need is for a New Testament
- The need for the Messiah, the righteous king to achieve salvation

### **Discussion**

#### **What does it mean to be a Major or Minor Prophet?**

The church classifies the prophets who wrote Books in the Bible into 4 Major and 12 Minor prophets according to the length of their writings and not according to their greatness as they are all men of God driven by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21)

- The Major Prophets are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel
- The Minor Prophets are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Note that these are not the only prophets of the Holy Bible. For example, Moses and David were great prophets, they wrote books but their Books were classified differently (Pentateuch, history, poetic...and so on).

## **Conclusion**

Jeremiah was faithful to his mission to the end of his life despite the hatred and sufferings he faced. He was alone, betrayed, persecuted from the rulers, the priests and the people but he never lost hope as he found the true comfort in his beloved God.

## **Activities / Workshop**

### **Who is the right prophet? And what is his role?**

- A person in the presence of God (23:22) and knows his mysteries
- A person sent by God and has the right to declare His word (1:1-10)
- A person who judges the people who break the Divine Testament
- A person who adopts the role of a judge when he speaks in the name of God and that of an advocate when he speaks in the name of his people
- A person whose main concern is to reveal the importance of the covenant with God and to prepare a ready people to live in God's New Life