

# Jeremiah—A Prophet to the Nations

## AIM:

Each one of us is important in God's eyes and that he has a plan and purpose for you. And that each one of us is uniquely made.

Theme : A Purposeful Life

UNIT 1, LESSON 4

## Jeremiah 1:1-19 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, <sup>2</sup> to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. <sup>3</sup> It came also in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

<sup>4</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

<sup>5</sup> “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. <sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.”

<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth.

<sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

<sup>11</sup> 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.” <sup>12</sup> Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.” <sup>13</sup> The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, tilted away from the north.”

<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to me: Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land. <sup>15</sup> For now I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord; and they shall come and all of them shall set their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its surrounding walls and against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup> And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. <sup>17</sup> But you, gird up your loins; stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do not break down before them, or I will break you before them. <sup>18</sup> And I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. <sup>19</sup> They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.

“I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over

## Teacher's Preparation

This lesson is about the purpose of our lives and it's shown to us through the life of one of the prophets whose ministry by human standards might be measured a failure.

By God's standards it was a great success because Almighty looks at it differently. In the context of Mathew 16:24-26; Jeremiah took up his responsibility/calling and denied himself and followed the Lord without considering what the world thought. Start by asking kids about what they think God's purpose is for each on them.

## Student Introduction

When we are called by God to do his ministry, it might not be the easiest thing to do by setting aside all the priorities we might have but, and take up the priorities God has set aside for us.

In her poem, "*It's not always easy*", famous Christian writer *Glenda Fulton Davis* portrays it clearly:

*It's not always easy to smile and be nice  
When we are called to sacrifice.  
It's not always easy to put others first  
Especially when tired and feeling our worst.  
It's not always easy to do the Father's will.  
It wasn't so easy to climb Calvary's hill.  
But we, as His children, should learn to obey;  
Not seeking our own but seeking His way.  
It's not always easy to fight the good fight.  
But it is always good, and it is always right*

Let us learn about two missionaries who were called and were used by God to do great things.

Catherine and William Booth lived in London in the middle of the nineteenth century, at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution had its own vices in England, like unemployment, labor abuse, forceful child employment and homelessness. Both of them were actively preaching the Gospel in many churches then. For the first 10 years of their marriage, William kept asking himself, "What should I do with my life. What is God calling me to do?"

Late one night, he took a walk through the slums of London's East End. Every fifth building was a pub. Most had steps at the bar so little children could climb up and order alcoholic drinks. That night he told Catherine how it seemed that God was calling him to do something for those children and their parents of London. He didn't need to go to some foreign country to find people who needed help. They were right there in front of him.

Later that year, 1865, the couple opened the "Christian Mission" in London's poorer districts. This grew into what we know as the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army went to the poorest areas, provided them food and shelter, and they tirelessly advocated the rights of factory workers, working women and homeless children.



Catherine and William  
Booth



## Bible Exploration

**Jeremiah** was a prophet who ministered during the reign of a good king, King Josiah. His ministry lasted some 40 years. He was a contemporary of Habakkuk and in his later years of prophetic ministry, Ezekiel.

Over 40 years he prophesied endlessly. Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible (*with the most words*) and is devoted to telling Judah about their judgment. Yet he remained committed and faithful to his calling. Jeremiah did exactly what God told him to do. Despite tremendous obstacles, he persevered. He watched the fall of his great city and, despite his intense sorrow, never wavered in his perspective of God's goodness.

*Jeremiah's  
ministry lasted  
about 40 years!*

It's important to realize that God does not always call us to what men might call "success." Instead, he calls us to be faithful. Jeremiah, though his ministry did not inspire repentance and though he ultimately saw the demise and captivity of his people; he did not abandon God's mission for his life. He was faithful, despite massive sorrow.

Let's now look in detail the key points from the bible portion.

Jeremiah was timid due to young age and inexperience (v.6), but he was:

- Very dedicated to God
- True Patriot
- Fearless and
- Faithful

The Call of Jeremiah is what you will see in (v.9-10), the divine endowment and commissioning;

*"Build and plant"* is the positiveness, which we all should have as Christians. It's a call for each one of us to build a life on good values. That is what we see in Paul's life in New Testament as God strengthened him in his ministry.

*"Uproot and tear down"* and *"destroy and overthrow"* seems negative but it's only pointing out that we have to eliminate evil and wrong practices that is in our society.

After God commissions Jeremiah as a prophet, God gives him three promises. You will see these visions are often spoken by God (or His Angel) to introduce a prophetic vision to Jeremiah.

1. *The almond tree* (v.11-12). The budding of the almond tree announced the coming of spring. Jeremiah would do ministry under some very difficult circumstances. It would not always look as though God is at work. Jeremiah needed to be reassured that God is at work to fulfill His word.

2. *The boiling pot* (v.13-16). The pot was coming out of the north (*Babylon was a nation in what is now Iraq*). God is saying to Jeremiah that He is going to judge and discipline His people for their sin. God is not going to continue to look the other way. The main sin that God accuses the people of is idolatry. They have

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forsaken Him and turned to idols that their hands made.

This is a warning to us!

God has unbelievable patience and longsuffering, but a day of judgment comes. God is Holy. He can't allow disobedience to go on indefinitely.

**3. *The city, a pillar and a wall* (v.17-19)** God doesn't leave Jeremiah to do this ministry alone. God strengthens Jeremiah, so that he can be faithful. God assures him again of his protection and to stand against abuse and persecution.

Finally v18-19 shows us the;

- Divine Defense
- Divine Protection
- Divine Presence

We might have looked only at a small portion from Jeremiah's life in this lesson, but we should take away the following from Jeremiah's life:

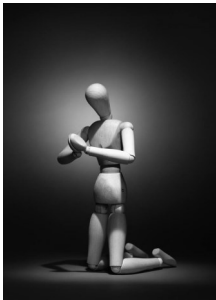
Jeremiah knew that Almighty God was in complete control of events. Many of his countrymen did not believe Jeremiah, and some of them continued to undermine his messages, which were directly from the Creator.

But God had said: "*You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.*" (v.12)

Our Creator has a definite plan and purpose for the salvation of mankind. Few things in this world really make sense unless we grasp that fact.

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## Activities



1. Find a partner in the class (Teacher help to group kids in twos or threes). Share how you want to be more faithful. Also, pray for each other that each of you can be faithful, that when trials come you will not abandon your mission, and pray that God grows your passion for His Word and the ministry He is giving you. Help your partner by reminding each other of your decisions sometime this week. Get a phone number if you need to, and be ready to answer to one another next week about this promise you're making today.
2. All of us have a talent hidden within us; so let's see if one of your hidden talents is writing. Write a *Poem* or *Short Story* or an *Essay* on the "*Purpose of your life through Christ*". Make this a take-home assignment.

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## Lesson Review

1. Jeremiah was a \_\_\_\_\_ Prophet? (major or minor)
2. Jeremiah was from \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Jeremiah's dad was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What did Jeremiah think about being a prophet?

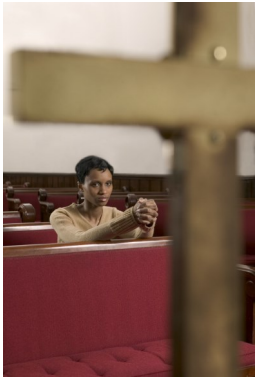
5. When did the Word of the Lord come to Jeremiah? Why did God call Jeremiah? When does verse 3 say his ministry ended?

6. What visions does God give Jeremiah to confirm his calling? What do these visions mean, according to the Lord? What sins did God say His people had committed?

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## Values For Life

“Our God’s Word is always reliable and trustworthy and whatever God says will happen for sure. It might not be on our timetable or plans, but God will always be faithful to keep His word to his kids.”



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## Faith In Action

1. Do you believe that the Almighty has a plan for your life?
2. Re-imagine the call of Jeremiah, as if God were calling you, and you least expected it. On two columns, write  
What would be your excuses?  
What would be your reasons to go?
3. Write two positive and two negative aspects about yourself.

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## Memory Verse

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

**Jeremiah 1:15**

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## Closing Prayer

Almighty Lord, who has given each one of us a purpose for our life. We appreciate highly allowing us to gather as a Sunday school class and learn about the prophecy and faith of Jeremiah. How he thrived through his life even when called at a very young age and even though in worldly words his work might not have been a success. Give us the spirit, the mind, and eagerness to love and trust you. Help each one of us to believe in the purpose of life that you have set for us. Help our dedication to you and our Christian life never be unraveled. Lord, thank you for giving your son Jesus Christ. Make us a blessing to many in our family, community, school, church and wherever we are sent by you and make us the soldiers holding up your torch for your kingdom. Amen

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## References

1. Article about Salvation Army:

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2. Pictures in regards to Salvation army article:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Salvation\\_Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Salvation_Army)

3. Parts of Prophet Jeremiah's study portion from Biblical standpoint:

<http://www.teensundayschool.com/>

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4. Parts of Prophet Jeremiah's study portion from Biblical standpoint:

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