

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS, Week 1

Jeremiah, the Tenderhearted Prophet of the Tenderhearted God

Scripture Reading: Jer. 1:1, 4-8, 10, 18-19; 4:19; 9:1, 10; 13:17

Jeremiah 1:1	The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,
Jeremiah 1:4	Now the word of Jehovah came to me, saying:
Jeremiah 1:5	Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; / And before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you. / I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.
Jeremiah 1:6	Then I said, Alas, Lord Jehovah! / Indeed, I do not know how to speak, / For I am a youth.
Jeremiah 1:7	But Jehovah said to me, / Do not say, I am a youth; / For everywhere I send you, you shall go; / And everything I command you, you shall speak.
Jeremiah 1:8	Do not be afraid of their faces, / For I am with you to deliver you , declares Jehovah.
Jeremiah 1:10	See, I have appointed you this day / Over the nations and over the kingdoms / To pluck up and to break down, / To destroy and to tear down, / To build up and to plant.
Jeremiah 1:18	And I am now making you today into a fortified city and into an iron pillar and into bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land.
Jeremiah 1:19	And they will fight against you , but they will not prevail against you ; for I am with you , declares Jehovah, to deliver you.
Jeremiah 4:19	My bowels, my bowels; I am writhing. / Oh, the walls of my heart! / My heart is moaning within me; / I cannot be silent; / For you hear, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, / The alarm of war.
Jeremiah 9:1	Oh, that my head were waters, / And my eye a fountain of tears , / That I might weep day and night / For the slain of the daughter of my people!
Jeremiah 9:10	For the mountains I will take up a weeping and wailing , / And for the pastures of the wilderness, a lamentation ; / Because they have been burned up so that no one passes through, / And the sound of cattle is not heard; / Both the birds of the sky and the beasts / Have fled and have gone.
Jeremiah 13:17	And if you will not hear it, / My soul will weep in secret places for your pride ; / And my eye will weep bitterly and shed tears, / Because the flock of Jehovah has been taken captive.

In verses 18 and 19 we have the second part of Jehovah's charge to Jeremiah. *"I am now making you today into a fortified city and into an iron pillar and into brass walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. And they will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you; for I am with you, declares Jehovah, to deliver you."* Why was it necessary for God to make Jeremiah into a fortified city, into an iron pillar, and into brass walls? This was necessary because a **battle was raging**. The kings, the princes, the priests, and the people of the land were enemies not only to Jeremiah but also to God. These enemies were fighting against God, and Jeremiah was sent to represent God and fight for Him. Those who fought against Jeremiah fought against Jehovah because Jeremiah and Jehovah were one. For this reason, God wanted Jeremiah to know that **He was with him** and that He had made him into a **fortified city**, into an **iron pillar**, and into **brass walls**. (*Life-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations, Chapter 5, Section 5*)

There is no lover of the Lord who does not cry. We should ache for sinners to the point of **weeping for them**. We should weep because God's glory is challenged, and we should weep in anguish that the enemy is not yet bound. Those who have no desire to please the Lord do not have this kind of experience. All those whose hearts are in the Lord's work surely weep. Jeremiah was a prophet who was greatly used by the Lord. He was such because of his tears. **He was anxious and felt responsible for God's children, and he wept for them day and night.** Tears are indispensable. This world needs more tears to wash it. Many young believers need tears to nurture them and educate them. Our spiritual life is maintained by tears. Many sinners are waiting for our sowing work with tears. Without tears, none of these works can be carried out. Today, men's consecrations are too inadequate. Many have consecrated their bodies, their energy, their time, and their money, but they have not consecrated their tears. No wonder many works are not complete and many believers are not properly edified. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 19: Notes on Scriptural Messages (3), Chapter 5, Section 6*)

Day 1

- I. Jeremiah was born a priest, but he was **called by God** to be a prophet not only to the nation of Israel but also to all the nations; hence, he was **a priest-prophet**—Jer. 1:1, 4-8.
- II. Jehovah appointed Jeremiah to be over the nations and over the kingdoms to **pluck up** and to **break down**, to **destroy** and to **tear down**, and to **build up** and to **plant**—v. 10:
 - A. The plucking up, the breaking down, and the destroying are Jehovah's **tearing down**, whereas the building up and the planting are Jehovah's **exalting**.
 - B. This corresponds to the two meanings of the name Jeremiah—"Jehovah exalts" and "Jehovah tears down."
- III. Jehovah made Jeremiah into a **fortified city**, into an **iron pillar**, and into **bronze walls** against the whole land, the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land; they would fight against him but **would not prevail against him**—vv. 18-19:
 - A. On earth there is **always a battle raging** between God and those who oppose Him and fight against Him—Eph. 6:12.
 - B. God fights not by Himself directly but through His servants who have been **sent by Him**—1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.
 - C. God sent His army—a young man named Jeremiah—to fight those who opposed Him:
 1. Jeremiah was **equipped** by God to such an extent that he became a fortified city and an iron pillar and bronze walls—Jer. 1:18.
 2. Those who fought against Jeremiah—Jehovah's one-person army—were actually fighting against Jehovah—v. 19a.

3. No one would defeat him because Jehovah was **with** him—v. 19b.

Day 2

IV. Jeremiah was an **overcomer speaking for God**—vv. 9-10; 2:1-2:

- A. In the age of typology, the overcomers were the prophets; all the genuine prophets were overcomers.
- B. When the majority of God's people were desolate, there was the need for some to **rise up to be God's overcomers** to **maintain the testimony** established by God.
- C. The prophets **took care of God's oracle first**, and based upon the oracle, they exercised, to some extent, God's authority, as seen with David the king and Nathan the prophet—2 Sam. 7:1-17; 12:1-15.
- D. The overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3 are the **fulfillment of the typology** of the prophets.
- E. As an overcomer, Jeremiah was an **anti-testimony**:
 1. The children of Israel had become desolate, and Jeremiah was called by God to be an **anti-testimony**—Jer. 27:1-15.
 2. God's people did not realize that they were deep in sin before God and that God had already ordained that Babylon would be used to punish them, causing them to be captured to Babylon—15:12-14.
 3. Because Israel had fallen into such a befuddled situation, Jeremiah, an overcomer, was an anti-testimony, speaking the word given to him by Jehovah and being contrary to the false prophets—27:16—28:17.

Day 3

V. The book of Jeremiah has as its particular characteristic and standing God's **tenderheartedness** plus God's **righteousness**—9:10-11; 23:5-6; 33:16:

- A. Our God is a **tenderhearted God**, full of compassion and sympathy, yet He is **absolutely righteous**—9:10-11; 23:6.
- B. According to the book of Jeremiah, God's love is a composition of His tender care, compassion, and sympathy; even while He chastises His elect people Israel, He is compassionate toward them—Lam. 3:22-23.
- C. The words in Jeremiah 9:10-11 and 17-19 express Jehovah's feeling concerning Israel's suffering of His correction:
 1. Although Jehovah was punishing Israel, He was still **sympathetic** toward them.
 2. The words us and our in verse 18 indicate that Jehovah joined Himself to the suffering people and was one with them in their suffering.
 3. Jehovah Himself was weeping in sympathy with His people.

VI. The book of Jeremiah is also an **autobiography** in which Jeremiah tells us of his situation, his person, and his feeling, revealing his tender heart:

- A. God is tender, loving, compassionate, and righteous, and Jeremiah, a **timid young man**, was raised up by God to be His **mouthpiece** to **speak for Him and express Him**—3:6-11; 4:3-31; 32:26-27; 33:1-2.
- B. Jehovah is the tenderhearted God, and in being tenderhearted, Jeremiah was absolutely one with God; thus, God could use the prophet Jeremiah to **express Him, speak for Him, and represent Him**—2:1—3:5; 4:19; 9:1, 10.
- C. Jehovah came in to correct His hypocritical worshippers, and Jeremiah reacted to Jehovah's correction; the prophet's reaction was very tender, **sympathetic**, and **compassionate**—8:18-19, 21-22; 9:1-2; 10:19-25.
- D. Jeremiah wept on God's behalf; **his weeping expressed God's weeping**—4:19; 9:1; 13:17:
 1. In his weeping Jeremiah **represented** God—9:10.
 2. We may say that God wept within Jeremiah's weeping, for in his weeping Jeremiah was one with God—13:17.
- E. Because Jeremiah often wept, even wailed, he is called the **weeping prophet**—Lam. 1:16; 2:11; 3:48:
 1. Although God was grieved and hurt because of His people, He had to find someone on earth who had these feelings.
 2. When His Spirit came upon that particular one, Jeremiah, and **put His feelings in Jeremiah's spirit**, the prophet could then **express the sorrowful feeling of God**.
 3. As we read the book of Jeremiah, we can **sense** that, although he wept, **his emotion had been disciplined**—4:19; 9:1, 10; 13:17.
 4. Jeremiah's sorrowful and weeping emotion had been disciplined and restricted so that God could come to him and use him to express the sorrowful feelings that were in His heart.

THE EMOTION OF PRAYER

One who **prays** not only needs to have a **proper spirit**, but the **various parts of his soul also need to be normal**. If we wish to learn to pray properly, we need to **adjust our entire being**. We should realize that we are fallen human beings and that not one part of our being is altogether sound. Never think that all the problems of our being have been resolved by regeneration. It is not that simple. Although regeneration has made our spirit alive, the various other parts of our being are still not exactly right, or proper. Therefore, they need to be readjusted. It is because our mind is still not proper that the Scriptures tell us a saved person still needs to be renewed in his mind. This renewing includes almost all matters related to the adjustment of the mind. However, the Bible also tells us to "rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). **This is a matter concerning the adjustment of the emotion**. Some do not have a proper emotion. They do not rejoice when they should be rejoicing, nor do they weep when they should be weeping. Such emotion is unsuitable if one is to be a normal Christian. **If it is necessary to have an adjusted emotion for our human walk, then how much more needful it is to have an adjusted emotion for prayer.**

(Lessons on Prayer, chapter 7, section 1)

Day 4

VII. In order that God may be fully expressed through us, we need to have **spiritual emotions, be tenderhearted with one another, and be able to serve God with tears—James 5:11; Exo. 34:6; Psa. 103:8:**

- A. A **spiritual person** is full of emotions; the more spiritual we are, the richer our emotions are—1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 6:11; 7:3; 10:1; 12:15:
 - 1. We need the Lord to **work on us** until our feelings are fine and tender.
 - 2. Every time God works on us, chastises us, and deals with us, our feelings become finer and more sensitive; this is the deepest lesson in the breaking of the outer man—4:16.
- B. In the church life we need to be **tenderhearted** with one another—Eph. 4:32:
 - 1. We should not judge and condemn our fellow believers but **be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them even as God in Christ also forgave us**—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:32.
 - 2. The more we experience Christ as our life supply, the more our hearts become tender, and when we are tenderhearted, we will forgive others.
- C. The apostle Paul **served** the Lord with tears and **admonished** the saints with tears—Acts 20:19, 31; Phil. 3:18:
 - 1. If we do not know how to weep or shed tears, we are not very spiritual.
 - 2. **When we live in the spirit**, using the soul as an organ, we will be able to serve the Lord and admonish the saints with tears—Acts 20:19, 31.

LIVING CHRIST BY TAKING OUR SPIRIT AS OUR PERSON WITH THE SOUL AS ITS ORGAN

The New Testament reveals that we have an old man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22) and that we are a new man (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:24; 2:15). Before we were saved, we were an old man without the new man. But after we were saved, we became a new man with an old man. Before we were saved, our soul was our person, and our spirit was merely an organ for us to contact and receive God. But when we were saved, receiving Christ as the life-giving Spirit into our spirit, our spirit became our new person, a new man. This new man is our regenerated spirit with Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit, as its life. **Our spirit has become our new person, and the soul has become an organ to serve our spirit.**

Our spirit by itself cannot weep or shed tears. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus wept (John 11:35; Luke 19:41). He wept from His spirit as His person with His soul as His organ. He did not love by the soul as His person; rather, He loved by His spirit as His person with His soul as His organ. Today, as Christians, we are the same as the Lord Jesus. In our Christian life **our soul must be denied as our person, yet our soul is still very useful as an organ.** When our soul rises up to be our person, we should tell our soul, “Dear soul, you were my person in the past but not today. Today you are my organ in resurrection, and my person is my regenerated spirit with the Lord Jesus as its life. This spirit is the new man, and this new man is my person. You, dear soul, are now only my organ. Stay in your position, and do not propose anything to me. When I love or think, you must be my **loving** and **thinking** organ.”

(The Experience and Growth in Life, chapter 3, section 2)

Day 5 & Day 6

- D. “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart” Paul wrote to the Corinthians “through many tears”—2 Cor. 2:4:
 - 1. Paul’s expression was **tender** and **filled with the intimate concern** of the ministering life—11:28; 12:15.
 - 2. In 2 Corinthians 7 Paul conveyed a deep, tender, and intimate concern for the Corinthians; his word was very touching—vv. 2-3.
 - 3. Because Paul’s expression was tender and filled with intimate concern, it had power and impact, and it was able to touch the believers deeply.
- E. When, in the church life, we pass through the valley of Baca (weeping), God makes this valley a spring; this **spring is the Spirit**—Psa. 84:6; John 4:14; 7:38-39:
 - 1. The **more** we weep on the highways to Zion (Psa. 84:5), the **more** we receive the Spirit; while we are weeping, we are being filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit becomes our spring.
 - 2. The tears we shed are our own, but these **tears issue in a spring**, which becomes the early rain, the **Spirit as the blessing**—Zech. 10:1; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:3.