

# JEREMIAH CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

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The words of the book of Jeremiah were spoken from 626 B.C. to approximately 560 B.C. God first spoke to Jeremiah during the 13th year of the reign of Josiah king of Judah (Jer 1:2; 25:3). That was in 626 B.C. The last event recorded in the book is the release from prison in Babylon of king Jehoiachin, 37 years after he was taken captive (Jer 52:31). Jehoiachin was sent into captivity in 597 B.C., making the date of his release from prison 560 B.C. Therefore, Jeremiah's career as God's prophet lasted about 66 years!

## **Jeremiah inspired of God**

As with the other 66 Books of the Bible, every word of the book of Jeremiah was inspired of God (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21). The book of Jeremiah itself plainly says that every word came from God (Jer 1:1, etc., especially Jer 1:9). We know the claim is true, because God has given the proof of it. First of all, every one of Jeremiah's many, many prophecies were fulfilled without failure, which is proof of divine inspiration. Deuteronomy 18:21-22 says, "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Jeremiah himself said to a false prophet whose prophecies *failed*, "The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him" (Jer 28:9). Furthermore, Jeremiah is quoted in the New Testament (Jer 31:15/Matt 2:16-18 ; Jer 31:31-34/Heb 8:8-12; Jer 9:24/1 Cor 1:31; Matt 27:9-10), which is equivalent to an endorsement of its divine inspiration. Finally, God bore witness by miracles to Paul (Acts 19:11; 2 Cor 12:12), and the other New Testament prophets who quoted Jeremiah (Matt 10:1-4; Acts 2:1-21; 3:1-16; 4:33; 5:12). It is God's own testimony by miracles that confirm (prove) that He gave every word of the Bible in general, and also to the Book of Jeremiah specifically (Mark 16:20; Heb 2:3-4). Therefore, there can be no doubt about the fact that every word of Jeremiah came from God. Finally, Jesus Christ identified Jeremiah as a true prophet of God (Matt 16:13-15; 27:35; Luke 11:50-51), which is the ultimate Divine stamp of approval.

## **The beginning of Jeremiah's work**

Jeremiah's career as a prophet of Jehovah began with these words: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and*

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(continued)

*I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, *Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.* See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant” (Jer 1:4-10). Some very interesting and important points are found in those first words God spoke to Jeremiah. First, God said that he knew Jeremiah and chose him as His prophet prior to his exit from his mother’s womb (those who argue that life does not begin at conception are opposing the truth spoken by the Creator of all things). Second, the *method* by which God inspired Jeremiah was by *putting the words in Jeremiah’s mouth*. He did not put thoughts in his head. Jeremiah’s *mouth* was the instrument by which God spoke *His word* to the children of Israel. And God’s used Jeremiah’s mouth at a critical point in Israel’s history.

## **Speaking to an ignorant people**

In the 18th year of king Josiah (621 B.C.), Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law of Moses in the temple (2 Kings 22:3-20; 2 Chr 34:8-33). “And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king’s, saying, Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us” (2 Kgs 22:8-13). As we know, this is only five years after God first spoke to Jeremiah in his youth (Jer 1:2). It does not appear to be any “accident” that during that very time, God sent Jeremiah to remind the people of the covenant and its curses (Jer 11:1-8).