

Jeremiah 1:11-19

One of the interesting aspects of Jeremiah is the illustrations God uses to communicate truth. In these closing verses of chapter one, God uses the "rod of an almond tree" and a "seething pot." We have God's promise of judgment in verses 11-16 and His promise of protection (for Jeremiah) in verses 17-19.

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

"Almond tree" שֶׁדֶּךָ *shaqed shaw-kade'* – almond tree, almonds. The word comes from *shaqad*, to wake, watch, awake, be alert. The almond tree was named "the awake tree" because in Israel it was the first tree in the year to bud and bear fruit. Its blooms precede its leaves, as the tree bursts into blossom in late January. Other trees are locked up in their winter's repose; and the almond tree bears fruit in March, just at the commencement of spring, when other trees only begin to bud.

12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

"I will hasten" – שֶׁדֶּךָ *shaqad shaw-kad'* – to wake, watch, awake, be alert - **"I will awake over My Word to perform it"**

Jeremiah 44:27 Behold, I will watch [שֶׁדֶּךָ *shaqad*] over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

The play on words (in the Hebrew) illustrates to Jeremiah that God will bring to pass His promise and as the almond tree is the first to bloom so my judgment will happen speedily.

13 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.

14 Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

God speaks to Jeremiah again using the second illustration a "boiling (seething) pot." In this case, the pot is facing (flowing out from) the north to the south. Babylon is east of Israel but their attack upon Israel came from the north. Ezekiel is shown the "boiling pot" illustration and it represents the judgment of a nation.

Ezekiel 24:

- 1 Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.
- 3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:
- 4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.
- 5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.
- 6 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.
- 7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust;
- 8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.
- 9 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.
- 10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.
- 11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

"The face thereof is toward the north" or better understood "the face thereof is from the north."

In verse 14, God is showing Ezekiel that His judgment is coming from the north, from Babylon.

15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

The gates of a city was where judgment was often rendered. Think of the book of Ruth and Boaz' actions.

Ruth 4:

- 1 Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.
- 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.
- 3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:
- 4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.
- 5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.
- 6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.
- 7 Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.
- 8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.
- 9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

The promise is God using Babylon to destroy Judah.

16 And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

The judgment is because of the sin of the people.

2 Chronicles 36:

- 11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.
- 12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.
- 13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.
- 14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.
- 15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:
- 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.
- 17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

"That is the reason why a nation dies. It forsakes its God, and evidences it by doing two things: by burning incense before other gods, i.e., by exalting ideas and philosophies which represent the various controlling passions and imaginations of men; and, by worshipping the works of their own hands, i.e., by exalting man, pointing to man as the solution to his own problems -- in other words, the rise of humanism. These are the signs of decay in a nation. This is what was happening in Israel."

Ray Stedman, *Called for a Crisis*, Jeremiah 1 sermon

- Romans 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
 - 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

- 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 is commanded to speak to the people and not shirk his responsibility. If he does God will confound him as He has confounded the people.

The commands to Jeremiah can be applied to believers in order to encourage our service for Him.

1. "Gird up thy loins" -

"A discussion of Jewish clothing would be helpful to our understanding. The essential garment for the Jew was the tunic. Because the tunic was so basic, it was identical for men and women except that the man's tunic was often shorter (knee length) and more colorful whereas the women's was often longer (ankle length) and blue. The tunic was normally a long flowing and full cut robe.

An undergarment, when worn, was either a loincloth (girdle) or a small waist covering. Peter in John 21:7 was wearing only a loincloth when he was "naked" or "stripped for work" in the fishing boat of his family. Throughout most of their history, the Jews never considered a loincloth only to be normal and adequate covering for the body. It is also believed that Jesus was crucified only wearing a loincloth because the soldiers had already removed his tunic (John 19:23).

The girdle was often made of leather or cloth and was used to hold the tunic to the waist. It was often used to hold money, tools or weapons. When men needed freedom to work, run or fight, they would tuck the hem of the tunic into the girdle to gain greater freedom and movement. This action was called "girding up the loins" and the phrase became a metaphor for preparedness. Peter uses the expression to commend clear thinking in the midst of difficult times. The women would often lift the hem of their tunics to help carry heavier or numerous objects. At night the girdle was loosened as the person slept comfortably." Maranatha Baptist Seminary, <https://www.mbu.edu/seminary/gird-up-your-loins/>

God calls all believers to be prepared.

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The context of 1 Peter 1 is that we will have difficulties in life and we need to be prepared for them

In 2 Peter 1:5-7 Peter tells believers how to prepare.

- 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
- 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
- 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

2. "Arise, speak unto them all that I command thee" -

"Arise" implies that one has been sitting down and not following what God has commanded.

God commands us to:

Matthew 28:

- 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
- 19 **Go ye** therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
- 20 **Teaching them** to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

1. Go
2. Evangelize
3. Baptize
4. Discipleship

3. "Be not dismayed" -

Discouragement can be a debilitating emotion.

"The word discouragement comes from the root word courage. The prefix dis- means "the opposite of." So discouragement is the opposite of courage. When we are discouraged, we have lost the motivation to press forward. The mountain seems too steep, the valley too dark, or the battle too fierce, and we lose the courage to continue."

Psalm 42:

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee...

"Discouragement can be a warning light suggesting to us that we have lost our primary focus. When we feel discouraged, it helps to get alone with the Lord and allow Him to examine our hearts and our motives (Psalm 139:23). Often, it is pride, greed, or covetousness that is feeding our discouragement. A sense of entitlement can worm its way into our hearts and highlight the discrepancy between what we have and what we believe we are owed. When we recognize that attitude as sin, we can repent, humble ourselves, and let the Holy Spirit readjust our expectations. When we use discouragement as a reminder that our priorities have become skewed, the feeling of discouragement can become a refining tool to make us more like Jesus."

The antidote for discouragement is to focus on the Lord.

Colossians 3:

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

4. "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls" -

Romans 8:

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

5. "They shall fight against thee" -

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

6. "They shall not prevail" -

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

7. "I am with thee" -

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

The result of disobedience.

1. "lest I confound thee before them" -

Isaiah 66:6 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

These people, in the Tribulation, will be sent a strong delusion.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: