

Jeremiah, the Crying Prophet
(Lamentations 3:48-51)

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, Before I formed you in the womb I knew and **approved** of you and before you were born I **separated** and set you apart, **consecrating** you; I **appointed** you as a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1: 5). Because God approved, separated, consecrated and appointed Jeremiah to be a prophet, no one else could take his place; it was sealed in His will. Elohim called Jeremiah to be a prophet in 626 BC to prophecy Jerusalem's destruction due to her idolatry, forsaking her God to worship Baal. It was during the thirteenth year of King Josiah's reign. So he was active as a prophet from that time until the destruction of Solomon's temple.

As Moses did, so Jeremiah resisted Elohim's calling to be a prophet by saying that he was only a child and could not speak. However the Lord corrected him saying, Say not I am only a youth; for you shall go to all to whom I shall send you and whatever I command you, you shall speak (Jer. 1:7). It seemed that Jeremiah had only one choice: to obey the divine calling. Obviously Jeremiah had not understood the meaning of the emphatic words, approved, separated, consecrated, and appointed to be a prophet. These words sealed the Lord's calling. Gird up your loins! Arise and tell them all that I command you, said the Lord; do not be dismayed and break down at the sight of their faces. .. For I, behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar and bronze walls against the whole land – against its princes, against its priest, and against the people of the land; they fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, **for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you (Jer. 1:17-19)**. These commands and assurance from the Lord directed Jeremiah to submit to God's calling, even though still with fear afraid of the people's reaction to his messages. He had a difficult task ahead of him. To understand Jeremiah's fear, let's see the picture YAHSUA gives of the rebellious heart of the city of Jerusalem. Just before His own death as a prophet, under the rejection of His own people, He said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who continue to **kill the prophets and to stone those who are sent to you!** How often I have desired and yearned to gather your children together as a hen her young under her wings, but you would not (Luke 13:34)! In another time YAHSUA warned the authorities of Israel saying, Woe to you! **For you are rebuilding and repairing the tombs of the prophets, whom you fathers killed;** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was slain between the altar and the sanctuary, Yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against and required of the age and generation (Luke 11: 47, 51).

Jeremiah was persecuted by condemning idolatry, priest's greed and the practice of the false prophets. His messages were rejected, burned, and mocked by the king and his sons; he was put in prison with only bread and water for his food; he was thrown into a cistern pit where there was no water, but only mire; he sank in it and he cried to God for deliverance; later he said, I called upon Your name, O Lord out of the depths of the dungeon; You heard my voice... You drew near on the day I called to You; You said, Fear not (Lam. 3:55-57); Jeremiah's heart was grieved toward the sin of his people; he was tender toward the destruction of the natural world; he asks the question, How long must the land mourn and the grass and herbs of the whole country wither? Through the wickedness of those who dwell in it, the beasts and the

birds are consumed and are swept away, because men [mocked] me saying, He shall not live to see our final end (Jer. 12:4). But to him also was given the message of deliverance and hope in the midst of judgment: For thus says the Lord, When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you and keep My good promise to you, causing you to return to this place; for I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome; then you will call upon Me, and you will come and pray to Me, and I will hear and heed you (Jer. 29:10-12). Jeremiah also made reference to the prophetic New Covenant fulfilled in YAHSHUA through His death on the cross. It is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant which they broke, although I was their Husband, says the Lord; but this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law within them, and on their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. At His last Passover supper with His disciples, just before His death, YAHSHUA took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you; for this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 16:27-28)

At the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah's sorrow is described in the book of his Lamentations. He said, How solitary and lonely sits the city that was once full of people! How like a widow has she become! She, who was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, has become a tributary; she weeps bitterly in the night! (Lam. 1:1,2a). For these things I weep; my eyes overflow with tears, because a comforter, one who could refresh and restore my soul, is far from me; my children are desolate and perishing, for the enemy has prevailed (Lam. 1:16). "My eyes overflow continually and will not cease until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven". Jeremiah was the weeping prophet who felt the hurt, the pain fallen on the people, because of their sin. In his sorrow for the people he revealed the God's hurting heart toward Judah. The Lord chose him to be his messenger and to fill the pain of his people; his heart was the heart of a true prophet. The prophet that mourns the spiritual condition of the people has his heart close to YAHWEH'S heart. In his prayer, Jeremiah said, But as for me, I have not sought to escape from being a shepherd after You, nor have I desired the woeful day [of judgment]; You know that. Whatever I said was spoken in Your presence and was from You (Jer. 17:16). This is a confirmation of a prophet whose heart is dedicated to follow the Lord. Although he was a complainer at times, he had a humble heart before the Lord. In one of his prayers, he said to the Lord, But You, O Lord, know and understand me and my devotion to You; You see me and try my heart toward You (Jer. 12: 3a). God had chosen him in spite of his insecurities; He knew Jeremiah's heart and weaknesses. But God chooses the weak, of this world so that His strength will be manifested in him; He chooses the seemingly obscured so that His Wisdom will shine through him. As Paul has said, When I am weak I am strong in Him, Who gives me strength. Jeremiah had a lot to learn in his journey of a prophet to be successful witness of God's message. In the midst of sorrow and judgment, Jeremiah recognized the Lord's faithfulness. He acknowledged that It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving-kindness that

we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great and abundant is Your faithfulness (Lam. 3:22-23).

It pleases the Lord that we, His people, mourn and weep for the transgressions of our nation and our family. The prophet Daniel fasted and prayed for three weeks as he sought the will of God for his people, by confessing his sins, the sins of the nation and of his ancestors. We are told to save others, snatching them out of fire; to take pity on those who are polluted by their sensuality (Jude 24). Those who mourn for the sins of others will be rewarded by our Lord. We must be "Weeping prophets" as we go through the polluted and sinful world praying for the salvation of those who have been snatched and thrown into the fire.