

Jeremiah: Prophet of Doom and Restoration

Marble Collegiate Church, Sept. 11, 2022

1. Being a Prophet is Hard!

Jeremiah 1:4-10

(4) The word of the LORD came to me:
(5) Before I created you in the womb, I selected you; Before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations. (6) I replied: Ah, Lord GOD! I don't know how to speak, For I am still a boy. (7) And the LORD said to me: Do not say, "I am still a boy," But go wherever I send you And speak whatever I command you. (8) Have no fear of them, For I am with you to deliver you— declares the LORD. (9) The LORD put out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: Herewith I put My words into your mouth. (10) See, I appoint you this day Over nations and kingdoms: To uproot and to pull down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant.

ירמיהו א':ד-י

(ד) ויהי דבר־י' אלי לאמר: (ה)
בְּטֶרֶם (אצורך) [אָצְרָךְ] בְּבֶטֶן יִדְעֵתִיךָ
וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מִרְחֹם הַקֶּדֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה נְבִיא
לְגוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ: (ו) וְאָמַר אֲהֵה אֲדוּשָׁם
י' הִנֵּה לֹא־יִדְעֵתִי דְבַר כִּי־נָעַר
אֲנֹכִי: {ס} (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר י' אֵלַי
אֶל־תֹּאמַר נָעַר אֲנֹכִי כִי עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ תִּלְךָ וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּךָ
תְּדַבֵּר: (ח) אֶל־תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם
כִּי־אֲתִיב אֲנִי לְהַצִּילָה נְאֻם־י': (ט)
וַיִּשְׁלַח י' אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּגַּע עַל־פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר י'
אֵלַי הִנֵּה נְתַתִּי דְבַרִּי בְּפִיךָ: (י) רֵאֵה
הַפֶּקֶד דְּתִיבָה | הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־הַגּוֹיִם
וְעַל־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת לְנִתּוֹשׁ וּלְנִתּוֹץ
וּלְהֶאֱבִיד וּלְהַרְגֹם לְבָנוֹת וּלְנָטוּעַ: {פ}

Jeremiah 20:7-18

(7) You seduced me, O LORD, and I was seduced; You overpowered me and prevailed. I have become a constant laughingstock, Everyone jeers at me.
(8) For every time I speak, I must cry out, Must shout, "Lawlessness and rapine!" For the word of the LORD causes me constant disgrace and

ירמיהו כ':ז-י"ח

(ז) פִּתִּיתַנִּי י' וְאַפְּתָת חֲזַקְתַּנִּי וְתוֹכַל
הֵייתִי לְשַׁחֲוֹק כָּל־הַיּוֹם כָּל־הַיּוֹם לַעֲגֵג לִי:
(ח) כִּי־מַדִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲזַעַק חָמָס וְשֹׁד
אֶקְרָא כִּי־הִלָּה דְבַר־י' לִי לְחַרְפָּה
וּלְקָלָס כָּל־הַיּוֹם: (ט) וַאֲמַרְתִּי
לֹא־אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ וְלֹא־אֲדַבֵּר עוֹד בְּשִׁמּוֹ

contempt. (9) I thought, “I will not mention Him, No more will I speak in His name” — But [His word] was like a raging fire in my heart, Shut up in my bones; I could not hold it in, I was helpless. ... (14) Accursed be the day I was born! Let not the day be blessed When my mother bore me! (15) Accursed be the one who brought my father the news: “A boy Is born to you,” And gave him such joy! (16) May he become like the cities the Lord overthrew! Let him hear shrieks in the morning and battle shouts at noon (17) because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother might be my grave, And her womb big [with me] for all time. (18) Why did I ever issue from the womb, To see misery and woe, To spend all my days in shame!

וְהָיָה בְּלִבִּי כְּאֵשׁ בַּעֲרַת עֶצֶר בְּעֶצְמֹתַי
וּנְלֵאִיתִי כָּל־כֵּל וְלֹא אוֹכֵל ...
(יד) אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִלְדֵתִי בֶן יוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדֵתֵנִי אִמִּי אֶל־יְהִי בְרוּךְ: (טו)
אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׂרָ אֶת־אָבִי לֵאמֹר
יִלְד־לָהּ בֶּן זָכָר שִׂמְחָה שִׂמְחָהּ: (טז)
וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא כְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הִפְּקָה יי
וְלֹא נָחָם וְשָׁמַע וְעָקָה בְּבִקְרָ וּתְרוּעָה
בַּעֲת צָהָרִים: (יז) אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מוֹתֵתֵנִי
מִרְחֹם וּתְהִי־לִי אִמִּי קִבְרִי וְרַחֲמָהּ־
הָרַת עוֹלָם: (יח) לָמָּה זֶה מִרְחֹם
יִצְאֵתִי לְרֵאוֹת עֲמָל וְיִגְוֹן וַיִּכְלֹוּ בְּבִשְׂת
יָמָי: {פ}

2. The crime is awful and the punishment fits.

Jeremiah 8:23-9:5

(23) Oh, that my head were water, My eyes a fount of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my poor people. (1) Oh, to be in the desert, At an encampment for wayfarers! Oh, to leave my people, To depart from them, for they are all adulterers, a band of rogues. (2) They bend their tongues like bows; They are valorous in the land For treachery, not for honesty; They proceed from evil to evil. They do not know Me, declares the LORD. (3) Beware, every person of every friend! Trust not even a brother! For every

ירמיהו ח:כ"ג-ט"ה'

(כג) מִי־יִתֵּן רֵאשִׁי מַיִם וְעֵינַי מְקוֹר
דְּמָעָה וְאֶבְכָּה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה אֶת חִלְלִי
בַת־עַמִּי: {ס} (א) מִי־יִתְּנֵנִי
בַּמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אַרְחִים וְאֶעְזְבָה אֶת־עַמִּי
וְאֶלְכָה מֵאַתָּם כִּי כָּל־מְנַאֲפִים עֲצָרֹת
בְּגִדִים: (ב) וַיִּדְרְכוּ אֶת־לְשׁוֹנָם קִשְׁתָּם
שֶׁקֶר וְלֹא לְאַמוּנָה גָּבְרוּ בְּאַרְץ כִּי
מִרְעָה אֶל־רְעָה וַיִּצְאוּ וְאֵתִי לֹא־יָדְעוּ
נְאֻם־יְיָ: (ג) אִישׁ מִרְעֵהוּ הַשְּׂמֵרוֹ
וְעַל־כָּל־אָח אֶל־תִּבְטְחוּ כִּי כָּל־אָח

brother betrays, Every comrade cheats.
 (4) One defrauds another, They will not speak truth; They have trained their tongues to speak falsely; They wear themselves out working iniquity.
 (5) You dwell in the midst of deceit. In their deceit, they refuse to heed Me —declares the Lord.

עֲקוּב יַעֲקֹב וְכָל־רֵעַ רָכִיל יִהְיֶה׃ (ד)
 וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ יִהְיֶה לֹא יִדְבָּרוּ
 לְמִדּוֹ לְשׁוֹנֵם דִּבְרֵי־שָׁקֶר הֵעֲנָה גְלָאוֹ׃
 (ה) שָׁבַתְהָ בְּתוֹךְ מְרֻמָּה בְּמְרֻמָּה מֵאֲנִי
 דַּעַת־אוֹתִי גְאֹם־יִי׃ {ס}

Jeremiah 9:16-23

(16) Thus said the Lord of Hosts: Call the dirge-singers, let them come; Send for the skilled women, let them come.
 (17) Let them quickly wail for us, that our eyes may run with tears, our pupils flow with water. (18) For the sound of wailing Is heard from Zion: How we are despoiled! How greatly is our shame! We must leave our land, abandon our dwellings! ... (20) For death climbed through our windows, has entered our fortresses, cutting off babes from the streets, the young from the squares.
 (21) Speak thus, says the Lord: human carcasses shall lie like dung upon the fields, like sheaves behind the reaper, with none to pick them up.

ירמיהו ט׳:ט״ז-כ״ג

(טז) כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת הַתְּבוֹנְנִי
 וְקִרְאוּ לַמְּקוֹנְנוֹת וּתְבוֹאֲינָה
 וְאֵל־הַחֲכָמוֹת שְׁלַחוּ וּתְבוֹאֲנָה׃ (יז)
 וּתְמַהֲרְנָה וּתְשַׁנֶּה עֲלֵינוּ נְהִי וּתְרַדְּנָה
 עֵינֵינוּ דְמָעָה וְעַפְעָפֵינוּ יְזֵלוּ־מֵיָם׃ (יח)
 כִּי קוֹל נְהִי נִשְׁמַע מִצִּיּוֹן אִיהָ שִׁדְדָנוּ
 בְּשָׁנוּ מְאֹד כִּי־עֲזַבְנוּ אֶרֶץ כִּי הִשְׁלִיכוּ
 מִשְׁכָּנוֹתֵינוּ׃ {ס} ... (כ) כִּי־עָלָה מוֹת
 בְּחַלּוֹנֵינוּ בָּא בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ לְהַכְרִית
 עוֹלָלִים מִחוּץ בְּחוּרִים מִרְחֻבוֹת׃ (כא)
 דִּבֶּר כֹּה גְאֹם־יִי וְנִפְלְאָה נִבְלַת הָאָדָם
 כְּדָמָן עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה וּכְעֵמִיר מֵאַחֲרָי
 הַקֹּצֵר וְאִין מְאֹסָה׃ {ס}

3. But the Good Life is at Hand

(22) Thus said the LORD: Let not the wise glory in wisdom; Let not the strong glory in strength; Let not the rich glory in riches. (23) But only in this should one glory: In earnest devotion to Me. For I the LORD act with kindness, Justice, and equity in

(כב) כֹּה ו אָמַר יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי־הַלֵּל חֲכָם
 בְּחֲכָמָתוֹ וְאֱלֹהֵי־הַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ
 אֱלֹהֵי־הַלֵּל עֲשִׂיר בְּעֲשָׂרוֹ׃ (כג) כִּי
 אִם־בִּזְאֵת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמְתַּהַלֵּל הַשְּׂכֵל־
 וְיָדַע אוֹתִי כִּי אֲנִי יְיָ עֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט
 וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ כִּי־בְאֵלָה חֲפָצְתִי
 גְאֹם־יִי׃ {ס}

the world; For in these I delight
—declares the LORD.

4. And restoration is possible

Jeremiah 31:2-9

(8) I will bring them from the north,
gather them from the ends of the earth.
The blind and the lame, those with
child and those in labor. A vast throng
shall return here. (9) They shall come
with weeping, and with compassion
will I guide them. I will lead them to
streams of water, by a level road where
they will not stumble. For I am a Father
to Israel, Ephraim is My first-born.

ירמיהו ל"א:ב-ט

(ח) הַנְּגִי מִבְּלֵיא אוֹתָם מֵאַרְץ צָפוֹן
וְקַבְּצֵתִים מִיַּרְכְּתֵי-אֲרָץ בָּם עֹנֵר וּפְסִיחַ
הָרָה וְיִלְדֵת יַחְדָּו קָתַל גְּדוֹל יָשׁוּבוּ
הִנֵּה: (ט) בְּבִכֵי יָבֹאוּ וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים
אוֹבִילִים אוֹלִיכִים אֶל-נַחְלֵי מַיִם בְּדַרְךְ
יִשָּׁר לֹא יִכְשְׁלוּ בָּהּ כִּי-הֵייתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
לְאָב וְאַפְרַיִם בְּכָרִי הוּא: {פ}

Jeremiah 31:15-20

(15) Thus said the Lord: A cry is heard
in Ramah^e— Wailing, bitter weeping
— Rachel weeping for her children. She
refuses to be comforted For her
children, who are gone. (16) Thus said
the Lord: Restrain your voice from
weeping, Your eyes from shedding
tears; For there is a reward for your
labor, declares the Lord: They shall
return from the enemy's land. (17) And
there is hope for your future —declares
the Lord: Your children shall return to
their country. (18) I can hear Ephraim
lamenting: You have chastised me, and
I am chastised Like a calf that has not
been broken. Receive me back, let me
return, For You, O Lord, are my God.
(19) Now that I have turned back, I am
filled with remorse; Now that I am
made aware, I strike my thigh. I am

ירמיהו ל"א:ט"ו-כ

(טו) כֹּה ו אָמַר יי קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע
נְהִי בְכִי תִמְרוּרִים רַחֵל מִבְּכָה
עַל-בְּנֵיהָ מֵאַנְהָה לְהַנְתֵּם עַל-בְּנֵיהָ כִּי
אֵינָנוּ: {ס} (טז) כֹּה ו אָמַר יי
מִנְעֵי קוֹלָהּ מִבְּכֵי וְעֵינֶיהָ מִדְּמָעָה כִּי-לִישָׁ
שָׁכַר לִפְעֻלָּתָהּ נְאֻם-יי וְשָׁבוּ מֵאַרְץ
אוֹיֵב: (יז) וַיִּשְׁתַּקְּנָה לְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ
נְאֻם-יי וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם: (יח)
שָׁמוּעַ שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם מִתְּנוּדָד יִסְרֹתַנִּי
וְאֹסֵר כְּעַגְלָל לֹא לְמַד הִשְׁבִּנִי וְאַשׁוּבָה
כִּי אַתָּה יי אֵלָקִי: (יט) כִּי-אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבִי
נַחַמְתִּי וְאַחֲרֵי הַגִּדְעֵי סַפְקֹתַי עַל-יָרֵךְ
בְּשֵׁתִי וְגַם-נִכְלַמְתִּי כִּי נִשְׂאֵתִי חֶרְפַּת
נְעוּרָי:

ashamed and humiliated, For I bear the disgrace of my youth.

(20) Truly, Ephraim is my darling child, a babe playing in my lap. For whenever I speak of him, I remember him still. My heart trembles and I will surely love him, declares the Lord.

(כ) הַבֶּן יִקְרֶה לִּי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יֶלֶד
שֶׁעָשָׂעִים כִּי־מִדֵּי דְבַר־לִבּוֹ זָכַר אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ
עוֹד עַל־כֵּן הָמוּ מֵעַל לֹו רַחֵם אֶרְחַמְנֹו
נְאֻם־יְיָ: {ס}

5. And Even a “New Testament”

Jeremiah 31:31-34

(31) See, a time is coming—declares the Lord—when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. (32) It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, though I espoused them—declares the Lord. (33) But such is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after these days—declares the Lord: I will put My Teaching into their inmost being and inscribe it upon their hearts. Then I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, “Heed the Lord”; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me—declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquities,
And remember their sins no more.

ירמיהו ל"א:ל"א-ל"ד

(לא) הִנֵּה יָמַיִם בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְיָ וְכָרַתִּי
אֶת־בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בְּרִית יְהוּדָה
בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה: (לב) לֹא כַּבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר
כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם בְּיוֹם הַחֲזִיקֵנִי בְיָדָם
לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִפְּחָה
הִפְּרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנֹכִי בַעַלְתִּי בָם
נְאֻם־יְיָ: (לג) כִּי זֹאת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר
אֶכְרֹת אֶת־בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרַי הַיָּמִיִם
הָהֵם נְאֻם־יְיָ נִתְּתִי אֶת־תּוֹרַתִּי בְּקֶרְבָּם
וְעַל־לִבָּם אֶכְתְּבֶנָּה וְהִיִּיתִי לָהֶם
לְאֵלֶקִים וְהִפְּחָה יְהִי־לִי לְעָם: (לד)
וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ
אֶת־אֲחִיו לְאֹמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת־יְיָ כִּי־כֹלָם
יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם נְאֻם־יְיָ
כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעוֹנֵם וְלִחַטָּאתָם לֹא
אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ: {ס}