

Ir-ot-41

“I have made thee this day... an Iron Pillar”

(Jeremiah 1-2, 15, 20, 26, 36-38)

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(This material reveals the many ways Jeremiah witnessed of Christ. It includes a brief dramatization depicting Jeremiah's suffering).

I. Jeremiah's call to be a prophet was a significant event.

A. He had been foreordained a prophet before coming to the earth (1:4-5).

Though young, he was given great powers and responsibility (1:7-10).

Jeremiah not only spoke as a prophet, *but his very life was a prophecy.*

1. Jeremiah was commanded by God to use role-playing as a teaching method. He removed a linen girdle, once close to him, to a distant place until it was rotted -- as a witness of Israel being cast off (Ch. 13:1-11); used pottery to demonstrate Israel was a marred pot (Ch. 18:1-6); and wore a yoke to demonstrate Israel's coming bondage under Babylon (Ch. 28:12-14).

II. *But the whole of Jeremiah's life was a role-play of Christ's future suffering*, [though we must recognize that in the meantime Jeremiah's sufferings were very real].

A. While some people may tire of hearing that the prophets' lives taught of the Savior's life, *we miss very important meaning if we ignore this truth.*

1. Furthermore, such parallels are very important to the Savior. And, if given with the spirit, they will help keep Christ's atonement uppermost in our minds.

2. Jeremiah was sent to the temple to call it “a den of thieves,” soon to be destroyed by the Lord (Jer. 7:1-2, 10-12). Jesus did the same, quoting Jeremiah (Luke 19:45-46).

3. As a result of this and other warnings, Jeremiah was smitten, like Jesus (Jer. 20:1-6; John 19:1; Mat. 26:68; Luke 22:62-65).

4. Nevertheless, Jeremiah continued teaching and making severe warnings in the court of the temple, as Jesus would later do. Both were imprisoned as a result.

5. Jeremiah was cast into a dungeon and mire. Not only was Jesus kept in a dungeon under the high priest's house as believed by many, but he took upon himself the filth of men's sins, suffered death and descended into Hell.

6. Jeremiah was lifted out again; Jesus was resurrected.

7. Ultimately, it was Jesus the Christ who had the greater power, by his word, to “root out, to pull down, to destroy, ... yet also to build and to plant” (1:10).

While Jeremiah would prophecy of these things, Jesus brought them to pass.

III. *Only when we understand that Jeremiah's life taught of Jesus' life can we fully understand the significance of many of Jeremiah's prophecies.*

A. Many of his prophecies had to do with the destruction of Judah *after* Christ was rejected. But those prophecies were hidden within prophecies of Judah's immediate destruction by Babylon.

B. Rome's destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Judea's people after Christ would be the most significant destruction of Israel by a worldly power. In fact this worldly power would eventually take over all Christianity. This is why John repeatedly spoke of “Babylon” as the power from which Christ's disciples,

including us, should flee. Both Babylon and Rome had similarities in their roles regarding Israel (Rev. Ch.17-18).

- C. Jeremiah spoke of Judah being scattered throughout the world (Jer. 9:16). Yet, in *his* time, the Jews captivity was limited to Babylon. It was Rome who later scattered Judah throughout the Roman Empire, and thus the world.
- D. When the Lord accuses the people of forsaking Him as their “fountain of living waters,” this was fully realized when He was rejected as the mortal Christ.

IV. Because of the kinds of “destruction” prophecies Jeremiah and other prophets made, many see the Old Testament God as cruel as contrasted to Christ in the New Testament as merciful. When we really understand Jeremiah’s prophecies these views are reconciled.

A. First, we must remember all that the Lord did from the beginning of time was to save and glorify Israel.

B. Again, we must understand these warnings of destruction point ahead to those who rejected and crucified Him as their Messiah, after He personally comes to the earth and fully suffers for all their sins in order to save them. It is really after Christ gives His life for their sake, yet His salvation is rejected, that punishment is severe.

C. We must remember that Jesus’ suffering was for *all* our sins! It has been aptly pointed out that all of us are responsible for Christ’s crucifixion. However, in accepting His atonement, and repenting, *we* can be forgiven!

D. Those things that happened to Israel are meant as witness to everyone that if we reject our Savior, we must suffer as Israel did, but more importantly as Jesus Christ Himself did! (See D&C 19:15-19).

V. Jeremiah suffered greatly in body and in spirit for his warnings, as is demonstrated in the dramatization below. In doing so he taught of Christ. Try to imagine how these things also related to the Savior, although the events in Jeremiah’s life are not always in the same order as Jesus’ fulfillment of them). [If orally read, you might skip the citations. They could be listed somewhere, however].

Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord. I will make this city desolate.... Every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished ” (Jer. 19:8) Behold I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words” (Jer. 19:15).

Narrator: “Now the son of the chief [priest] in the House of the Lord heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. And he smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks which was by the House of the Lord (Jer. 20:1-2). Now it came to pass that in the [morning] Jeremiah was brought out of his stocks, and Jeremiah said,

Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

“Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give unto the hand of their enemies, which shall ... take them, and carry them to Babylon” (Jer. 20:4-6).

Narrator: [This prophecy included the fact that the Gentiles that conquered Judah after Christ would also receive Israel’s *spiritual* blessings.]
“Now when Jehoiakim became king of Judah, the Lord said to Jeremiah,”

Voice of the Lord to Jeremiah: “Stand in the court of the [Temple] , and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.... Say unto them, If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law... to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets,... then will I make this ... city a curse [before] all the nations of the earth.” (Jer. 26:1-2, 4-6).

Narrator: “And it came to pass when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all the Lord had commanded him, the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, ‘Thou shalt surely die’.” (Jer. 26:8). And the priests took him before the princes of the land. Then spake the priests unto the princes of the land,

Chief Priest: “This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city [and the temple]. (Jer. 26:11).

Jeremiah: “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the Lord has sent me to speak all these words in your ears (Jer. 26:14-15).”

Narrator: “Then said the princes, ‘This man is not worthy to die; for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord.’ [Jer. 26:16]. Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord.

Voice of the Lord to Jeremiah: “Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations... (Jer. 36:1-2).”

Narrator: Then Jeremiah called a scribe, Baruch, and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying ... (Jer. 36:4)

Jeremiah: “I am shut up.... I am [not allowed to] go into the house of the Lord [any more]. Therefore, go, and read from the roll what thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord’s house.... It may be they will

[yet] return from evil: for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people (Jer. 36:5-7).

Narrator: “Then read Baruch ... at the... gate of the Lord’s house, in the ears of all the people [the warnings of Jeremiah] (Jer. 36:10).” And the King heard of Baruch’s reading, and he sent and fetched the roll. And it was read in his ears (Jer. 36:20-21).

“Now the King sat in his winter house,... and there was a fire on the hearth... And it came to pass that when three or four leaves of the scroll had been read to him, the King cut it with the penknife and cast [the writings of Jeremiah] into the fire... until all the scroll was consumed in the fire (Jer. 36:22-23).

“Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe... who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added unto them many [other] words” (Jer. 36:32).*

Narrator: Jeremiah continued to be mocked at, laughed at, and to suffer great things because of his boldness in warning of Judah’s future destructions. His sufferings caused him great lamentations.

Jeremiah: “I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For ... I cried out, I cried ‘violence’ and ‘spoil;’ The word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily. **Then I [determined within myself], I will not make mention of [the Lord], nor speak any more in his name.**

“But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I *could not stay*” (Jer. 20:7-10).

VI. Jeremiah was blessed for all he endured for the word of the Lord:

A. He was promised that even though the princes, the priests, and the people would be against him, he would have strength to stand as “an iron pillar” (Jer. 1:17-19).

B. The Lord promised He would deliver Jeremiah, (1:19), and he was delivered. He survived all the persecutions and even the conquest by the Babylonians and eventually found safety in another land. **

C. Furthermore, everything that Jeremiah had prophesied against the people of his time, and those things which foreshadowed the suffering of Christ and the destruction of His persecutors, all came to pass.

* It is good to remember that after Jesus was crucified, his disciples wrote of His life and teachings, just as Baruch wrote Jeremiah’s further words.

** Jeremiah was allowed to go into Egypt with others of Judah. But there are strong traditions in Ireland, even to the point of claiming where his burial place is, that he eventually ended up in that part of the world, taking with him daughters of Zedekiah.