

Riddles in Prophecy - The Prophet Jeremiah: 6

(0:23 - 13:01)

His ministry began 40 years prior to the destruction of the temple and Great Exile. He predicted that the beautiful temple, which he referred to as a den of robbers, would be destroyed. The priest considered him enemy number one, plotted against him, even sought his life.

He criticized his people of having ears to hear and eyes to see, but not hearing instinct. He also spoke of a future new covenant for God's people, a covenant that included the lost and scattered sheep of Israel, and he predicted the eventual return of the same. Welcome to Riddles in Prophecy, class number six in my series, The World and Words of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Good morning and welcome. We begin today in 627 BCE. Come with me to Jerusalem.

We're in the days of Josiah. We're in the 13th year of his reign, and according to the Chronicler, according to the writer of the book of Chronicles, as we have it today, for five years in 627, for five years, Josiah has been seeking the God of his father David, and he is one year into a massive reform, a purge as it's called in Scripture, of all things which are contrary to the established practices of worship, a reform that is pictured as extending not only in the territories of Judah, but into the north as far as the territory of Naphtali. So again, we are in the 13th year of Josiah's reign.

The year is 627, and it is in this year that Jeremiah, according to the book called by his name, it's in this year that Jeremiah first hears the word of the Lord. It begins, 627, begins a 40-year career for the prophet Jeremiah. Now, it's interesting that Jeremiah's prophetic career extends for 40 years.

Now, some people have proposed that that's just sort of a way to say in biblical writing, a long time, but I believe that the dates are consistently demonstrated to indicate that no, this is actually 40 years, from 627 all the way up until the end of the biblical period, basically, when the exile takes place. But that number 40 also occurs in the ministries, if you will, of other prophets. For instance, Moses.

Moses's career, basically, from the time they leave Egypt until they come to the borders of the Promised Land to go in and take possession thereof is 40 years. There are other similarities between Jeremiah's prophetic career and that of Moses. Namely, they both refused to call in very similar language.

In fact, Jeremiah, as we'll see momentarily, Jeremiah says, I can't speak. I don't know how to speak. Well, although the wording is slightly different, that's what Moses says in Exodus chapter 4 verse 10.

Now the difference is, and this is a key difference and we're going to show parallels, but we're also going to show, we're going to compare and contrast the career of Jeremiah with other prophets as well. So for instance, Moses brings the children of Israel, God's chosen people according to the narrative, from Egypt to the Promised Land. Not into the Promised

Land, they do that after he dies, but he brings them from Egypt to the Promised Land, whereas Jeremiah's role is the opposite.

He brings them from the Promised Land, and then by the time we get to Jeremiah chapter 42 and 43, 44 verse 1, we find that Jeremiah is with his people, some of his people at least, in Egypt. So we're going to make some comparison there. Now what I want you to do this morning is, let's open up Jeremiah chapter 1, Jeremiah chapter 1, and I want to begin in verse 4. I'm going to read Jeremiah 1, 4 through 6. Now the word of Jehovah came to me saying, before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I consecrated you, I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Then I said, O Lord God behold, I do not know how to speak because I am a youth. Now at this point in the Hebrew text, there is a break, a white space in the text from Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4 through 6, they are one literary unit, and then there is a major break, what we call a petukha in the text. I want to bring these break points out because we tend to follow chapter to chapter.

What I want to do is I want to point out sections according to the ancient scribal method of reporting. So what we get in Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4 through 6 is, we understand that Jeremiah's call, or his identification, or his selection for this very important role, takes place before he's born. Before you came forth from the womb, he says he was known, he said I know you, the root word yadah, he intimately knows this Jeremiah who is to come, and then it says further that he set him apart.

Now the root word there is kadosh, it's the translation I think I just read the New American Standard uses sanctified, that's sort of a parochial word, but he's saying basically I knew you before you were born and I set you apart as a prophet to the nations. All of this takes place before Jeremiah is born. He's called a prophet to the nations.

Now this is interesting, nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible does the phrase prophet to the nation occurs. He is the only prophet that is called the prophet to the nations. Does it mean that we don't have other prophets who speak prophetic oracles concerning the nations? In fact Obadiah, if you read the book of Obadiah, you know you're talking about Edom, if you read Isaiah you'll see that there are other, there are oracles to the nations.

Jeremiah too has sections which are devoted to or dedicated to oracles to the nations. For instance, Jeremiah chapter 25, we're not there yet, but Jeremiah 25 talks about a cup of wrath. We don't know how literally to take this, but Jeremiah is told to bring this to these different nations and have them drink from the cup.

We also have in the Jeremiah chapters 46 through 51 a series of oracles to the nations. So before he's born, God knows him and sets him apart in this role of a prophet to the nations. Now verses 5 and 6 lead us into what is seemingly presented as a dialogue between God and the prophet, and we get both the word of God and we get a response from Jeremiah.

He tells him he's called, Jeremiah responds with reluctance, and we might say, if it's okay to say this, an excuse as to why he cannot accept. He says basically, I don't know how to speak, and again this is reminiscent of the language we get in Exodus chapter 4 verse 10. Moses says he is a man of heavy speech and heavy tongue, which interestingly enough is used only

one other time in the prophet Ezekiel, and there it means someone who doesn't speak Hebrew.

So that's for another class, I've covered that extensively in previous classes on the Pentateuch, but his excuse, his reason, according to the Hebrew text is he na'ar anochi, he na'ar anochi, because I am a na'ar, because I am a na'ar. Now in English translations, that's going to be translated variously. Sometimes it's going to say, because I'm a young boy, I'm a lad, because I'm a youth, I mean all the translations are all over, because na'ar is not very specific actually.

It does indicate youth, but youth is sort of not very specific, right? So for instance when we read in the stories the Joseph saga, for instance in Genesis 37 where we encounter Joseph, we read that he is a na'ar and he's 17. Now I'm going to propose that generally that's what this word means, and I believe, again this is speculation on my part, we don't have an age. It would be nice if it says, and Jeremiah when he was 17 years old the Lord spoke to him.

We just read that he's a na'ar. But I also want to remind you that we're in the days of Josiah, and when this word comes to him, and he refuses it based on the wording ki na'ar anochi, he's saying I'm a young guy, but he's in the 13th year of Josiah's reign, Josiah is only 21. So I'd like to almost propose that they're about the same age, that God selects.

Now remember, Josiah too is selected prior to his birth. Now we get that because of 1st Kings 13. 1st Kings 13 tells us, gives a prediction of a coming descendant of David who will come in and bring about reform and bash idols, etc, etc, and you can read that on your own.

But in essence what we have are two young men, probably about the same age. Jeremiah is between 17 and 21 probably, and Josiah is 21, so we have these two. A Davidic ruler and a Levite.

(13:01 - 24:43)

Now the Levite that we have, the priest that we have, is someone that belongs to a line of priests which have been banished to Anatod, at least during the days of King Solomon. Remember when Solomon, as David is dying, we had a split in the priesthood. The priesthood of Beatar follows the wrong horse, if you will.

They side, Beatar sides against Solomon, and Zadok is the one who picks the right candidate in election that year. And because he did, everyone else is silenced. And so a Beatar is banished to the priestly town of Anatod, and this is where Jeremiah and his father Hilkiah are from, and we'll get into more of that as we go.

Now again, on Jeremiah as a Naar, we do know that that generally means, even though it's not specifically an age, we'll say this, it means that they're marriageable. They're at an age that means they could get married and have a family. So it's a young man, a young person, but nonetheless that's about all we can say for certainty.

The word Naar is used one other time in Jeremiah. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 51, Jeremiah 51 and verse 22. I want to set, I want to understand Naar in Jeremiah's time in case it's different than another period.

And this is in a really bad section of prophecy, meaning it delivers a rough word, and with you I shatter man and woman, and with you I shatter the old man and youth, and with you I shatter the young man and virgin, and it goes on. In this particular portion of text, similar to parallelism, what we get is zakhen v'naar. Zakhen is a word which means old, and naar means young.

So it's like saying, I'm gonna shatter old and young, sort of generically, not specifying how old, but then the next phrase is b'chur uv'tulah, b'chur uv'tulah, and these phrases indicate sort of generically young and old. B'tulah is typically translated as a virgin, whereas Allah is a young maiden. Now beyond marriage age, in terms of Jeremiah, we just simply can't go for certain, so I want you to clearly get that I'm making a guess, saying he's between 17 and 21.

Others have put forward guesses, but please understand, no one knows. Some have proposed that Jeremiah receives the call as a very, very young child, but we just, again, we don't know. Now we also know, not only is he young when he's called, but he's not married, and he's not too married.

This is important, and I want you to understand, I believe that God has to get the word to him at an early age to tell him not to get married, because otherwise he may have, and so this message has to come to him young. Remember, Josiah already has a son at the age of 14, he has another at the age of 15, I've shown that in another class. Go with me this morning to Jeremiah chapter 16, Jeremiah 16.

The word of the Lord also came to me saying, you shall not take a wife for yourself, nor have sons or daughters in this place. But this is what the Lord says concerning the sons and daughters born in this place, and concerning their mothers who give birth to them, and their fathers who father them in this land. They will die of deadly diseases, they will not be mourned or buried, they will be like dung on the surface of the ground, and they will perish by sword and famine, and their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the sky and for the animals of the earth.

For this is what the Lord says, do not enter a house of mourning or go to mourn or console them, for I've withdrawn my peace from this people, declares the Lord, and my favor and compassion. Both great people and small will die in this land, they'll not be buried, people will not mourn for them, nor will anyone make cuts on himself or have his head shaved for him. People will not break bread in mourning for them to comfort anyone for the dead, nor give them a cup of consolation to drink for anyone's father or mother.

Moreover, you shall not go into a house of feasting to sit with them and to eat with them. Now I believe, remember we have shown fairly convincingly, I believe, that the book of Jeremiah as we have it is not in order. Jeremiah 16 comes to me, it strikes me, though I don't have evidence within the text to put a date on it, you know, so many of these sections in Jeremiah will say in the such-and-such year of so-and-so, this doesn't have that, it just has God telling Jeremiah, you don't get married.

Now it's interesting that in verse 5 through 8, it's giving specific instructions to Jeremiah about how tough his life is going to be, and it's in the singular. You will not do this, you will not do that, etc. We know though, Jeremiah is young, he's old enough to be married, but that is forbidden to him.

He is old enough to have children, but that is forbidden to him as well. Not allowed to mourn or console, and it says even further, I'm paraphrasing, and don't you dare have any fun or friends, right? Because you're not to go feast and sit with other people. Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet for a reason.

He is totally isolated from everything around him, meaning he can't participate in the normalcy of life. You can't be married, you can't have children, you can't go to parties, you are going to be my spokesman. Now remember, this is very important.

We have Jeremiah and Zephaniah whose job it is to tell the truth. They're to tell the truth to the people who are being fed from the administration that things are going well. I want to talk just a moment about Jewish marriage.

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard that a Jewish person must be married young, you know, that this is a rule. This, by the way, is a rule, but it is late, it is very late. It's traditional, it's rabbinic, it's mentioned in Judaism.

In fact, to marry and have a family is listed according to the 613, you know, the rabbinic enumeration of all the commandments in the Torah. To reproduce and to have a family is commandment number one. And so a lot of people, historians in particular, will put forward a case, and I know that this is a Hebrew Bible class, but I am a historian, so I want you to hear this, a lot of people will put forward a case that Jesus of Nazareth was married because it was the custom that you had to be married, and so all the fancy books and a lot of theories put forward that Jesus had to be married, and quite possibly have children that, you know, that carried off the secret grail, etc.

But what is interesting to me beyond this is that according to our sources, if you read the gospel sources in particular, what you find are many correlations, connectedness, between the life and mission and actions of Jesus of Nazareth and those of Jeremiah, and I want to go through a few of these from a historical point of view, because I think they are absolutely important for a reason that is to come in a future class. Both of these, Jeremiah and Jesus, according to our sources, appear on the scene to begin a prophetic ministry about 40 years before the destruction of the temple of their day, right? Forty years before the temple of their day is destroyed, the temple in the days of Jeremiah, he's called by God and he'll minister for 40 years. Jesus will come forward in the second temple period, and then 40 years after his, air quotes, ministry begins, the temple is destroyed.

But not only that, both of these temples have been, by the time they're destroyed, recently renovated, and spirits are high, and the beautification projects have taken place. A temple in each case, which has been recently beautified and expanded, I might add, will be destroyed 40 years after these two come forward. Both Jeremiah and Jesus of Nazareth have very negative assessments of the house in their day.

They talk very openly about the absolute and utter corruption of the house, and I'm telling you that that is the case. It was the case in Jeremiah's day, and it was the case in the days of Herod the pig's house at the same time. Now both find themselves as enemies of the priesthood that rules in their time.

(24:43 - 53:11)

Both of these guys, Jeremiah and Jesus, are enemy number one to the priesthood. Both are very critical of the priesthood in their respective times. Now after Jeremiah, go back to Jeremiah, after Jeremiah is told you can't get married, you can't have children, in that same chapter there is a prophecy about fishing for men.

I find it interesting that in the gospel narratives that soon after Jesus of Nazareth launches his mission, he goes out and seeks to make fishers of men. The correlation is uncanny. Jesus mentions this same fishing of men, and it could very well be that likely he is following Jeremiah's lead on both accounts.

So I would propose that, at least as a historian, when I look at the historical Jesus, I think he is in these texts. So if some people say, well, I don't even believe Jesus existed. Well, I do, and I think he's in these texts, and I think he looks at Jeremiah's text, and he finds himself, if you will, at least part of his role.

So he says, you know what? Just like Jeremiah, I'm not going to get married either, for similar reasons. Now, both claim, at least part of their message, a central part of their message, that the people that they are here to reach, that their ministry, their word has to reach, is a group that is identified as the scattered northern kingdom of Israel. In fact, Jeremiah in chapter 50 verse 6 talks about the lost sheep.

He refers to this missing, scattered, absent group as lost sheep, and then down in, that's in verse 6 of chapter 50, and in chapter 50, Jeremiah 50 verse 17, he refers to them as scattered sheep. Jesus of Nazareth would follow suit. Both Jesus and Jeremiah claimed that their audience had ears to hear, but they didn't hear.

Eyes to see, but they didn't see. You can look at Jeremiah 5 and 21 as an example for Jeremiah, and Jesus would quote Jeremiah in Matthew 13, 14, or the writer of Matthew would. Now this language and description of those who have ears to hear, eyes to see, not hearing, not seeing, is also, interestingly enough, the language that the psalmist in Psalm 115 verse 5 and 6, and Psalm 135 verse 16, that exact language, ears to hear but don't hear, eyes to see but don't see, that language is in reference to idols.

So basically, these two are looking at their audience and they're saying they're just like, they're not even alive. The people aren't alive. I find that fascinating.

Both Jeremiah and Jesus cautioned against sowing among the thorns, Jeremiah chapter 4, by the way, if you want to look at that in your own time, and Jesus referred to the same in a parable, and I think that they both have a similar intended meaning when they speak of that. And finally, believe me, there are many, many more that I'm not getting into today. This really isn't my class today, but I just wanted to bring up as part of the riddles in prophecy that Jesus of Nazareth probably and likely, or the writer of the stories, if you will, are suggesting that both Jeremiah and Jesus are the two figures, no one else does this, who talk about a coming new covenant, a new covenant that is to come.

Both speak of this and seek to bring it about. Part of that restorative action involves reaching, again, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Go back to Jeremiah chapter 1.

Jeremiah chapter 1 and verse 7, we're picking up after the white space, this is Jehovah's response to Jeremiah, for the hand of Jeremiah.

Notice the first person. Jeremiah is recounting this initial call. Remember, by the way, in Jeremiah 36, Jeremiah was told to write down everything that had happened in his prophetic ministry, so it would be probably 23 years after the call where Jeremiah writes these words down.

We covered that in a previous class, Jeremiah 1 7, but the Lord said to me, do not say, I am a youth, or I am a Naar. By Yomer Yehovah Elai, no you shall say Naar Anochi. Remember, he says the reason he can't speak, Jeremiah says, he says Ki Naar Anochi, and God says don't say Naar Anochi.

He says, because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to save you, says Jehovah. Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, to tear down, to destroy, to overthrow, to build, and to plant white space. There is a major break before verse 7, where God's response to Jeremiah's reluctance, and that leads us through the final phase, so this is his calling, and then we have a break. Now, the context shows that this is a direct continuation of what precedes it in verses 4 through 6. This is a major section that focuses on the call of Jeremiah.

Now, there is language here that we have to ask ourselves, how literally do we take this? Jeremiah says, the Lord, that's Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh, that the Lord reached with his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth. Now, how literally are we to take this? In Hebrew, v'yagah-al-pi, and he touched my mouth. Touched, literally, to touch is the way it reads.

This exact phrase, the touching, v'yagah-al-pi, is used in one other text, and it happens to be the call of another prophet. Go with me to Isaiah chapter 6. Isaiah chapter 6. Notice in Isaiah chapter 6, you would think, now if I'm going to tell you that this is part of the call of Isaiah, even though it's appearing in chapter 6, I'm going to show you that this particular action, the putting words in Isaiah's mouth, takes place early in his prophetic career. So I'm going to read chapter 6, if you will bear with me.

In the year of King Uzziah's death, by the way, he's called Uzziah, he's called Azariah, depending on whether you read Kings or Chronicles. His death, for instance, is in Kings and Chronicles. Second Chronicles 26, 16 through 21 is very detailed.

He is arrogant, he gets leprosy, the whole nine yards. Okay, but here we go. In the year of King Uzziah's death, it says, I saw Adonai.

I saw Adonai sitting on the throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple. Seraphim were standing above him, each having six wings, with two covered his face, with two covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said, Kedosh, Kedosh, Kedosh, Jehovah Tzaveot.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of armies, or host. The whole earth is full of his glory. Now imagine, Isaiah is witnessing this in a vision in the throne room.

The foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out while the temple was filling with smoke. And I said, notice first person, Isaiah, woe to me for I am ruined, because I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of armies.

My eyes, he says, have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. Now, I thought there were passages that says no one can see me. Okay, well that's part of the questions.

Why we study sources in biblical text. Verse 6. Then one of the Seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, behold this has touched your lips and your guilt is taken away and atonement is made for your sin.

Now let me explain a couple of things. Years ago in my former faith, you know, I was interested as a very young man in the different kinds of angels. Seraphim and cherubim and so forth and so on.

What we get when we look at the Seraphim, we get an idea of what their role is. Most angel books don't know this, but a Seraph, the word Seraph in Hebrew means burn. Now what we get from context here is that the Seraphim, that's plural, these Seraphs, if you will, they have a job.

They are attendants at an altar in the throne room. Now the word burn is part of their name. See it says right here he took a burning coal in his hand.

Well that's perfect job for a Seraph, because the Seraph is attendant to a burning altar, right? That's why they get the name. Which he had taken from the altar with tongs and he touched my mouth with it. Now the phrase he touched my mouth is the same exact phrase for what we read in Jeremiah chapter 1, a little bit different in that who is doing the touching and what does that touching yield.

We'll talk about that in just a moment. Now I did want to tell you that the year that Uzziah dies, the story is in 2nd Kings 15, by the way, verse 7 talks about the death of Uzziah. Now in the Israel Museum, if you go on a tour with me to Israel, I will show you this plaque that was discovered, and on this plaque it is a grave marker basically, and it says it's an ancient Aramaic inscription, and it says something to the effect that these are the bones of Uzziah.

Don't open, in the Israel Museum. Really cool. Now why would they say don't open? Well, for one, you don't want people opening the king's bones, but this remember he's a leper, he's got some kind of funky disease, and it could be for that reason as well.

But Uzziah is a king when Isaiah's prophetic career begins. Let me just show you one other thing while we're in Isaiah. Go to Isaiah 1, Isaiah 1 and verse 1. The vision of Isaiah, by the way I'm going to teach Isaiah as well, God willing, at some point in the future.

The vision of Isaiah, yeshiahu, the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotam, Ahaz, and Kiskiah. So Isaiah begins his prophetic

career in the days of Uzziah, and Uzziah dies in chapter 6. So early in the prophetic career of Isaiah, he has this vision, he is called, and his mouth is touched, and you'll hear a little bit more. These connect in a way, this is one of the riddles of prophecy.

Let me just say this, just like Moses, 40-year career, Jeremiah, 40-year career, Isaiah, 40-year career. Isaiah's career spans about 40 years, if you add up the years of the kings from Uzziah to Kiskiah. Now in verse 7 of chapter 6, it says that God, or that this seraphim, touched his mouth.

So in Isaiah, we have a seraphim, a seraph, touched the mouth with a coal, and it brings about the removal of guilt, and the sin, it says, is covered. It's covered. Now Jeremiah doesn't have an angel, or a seraph, or whatever, or a coal touch his mouth.

What Jeremiah says is that the Lord, Jehovah, touches his mouth with his hand. Now you might say, well God doesn't have a hand, you know, they're traditional beliefs, and so forth and so on. I'm just talking about what the text says.

Jehovah with his hand touched Jeremiah's mouth. He doesn't say, and by this you'll know that your guilt is atoned, and you know, no, he says, by this I am putting my words, like God said, I'm putting my words in your mouth. Very, very direct language.

No other prophet, no other prophet, has this experience. Not to diminish Isaiah's experience, but nothing like this occurs in any other text. Now you'll find a couple of things that are close in Isaiah chapter 6, that's kind of close, there's the idea of touching the mouth.

Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 16, you'll recall in Deuteronomy chapter 10, Daniel, Deuteronomy, Daniel chapter 10, verse 16, Daniel has a vision, and you know, this, we call it an angel, but it really doesn't say that. This messenger comes to him, and he touches his mouth. So, but that's, it's not the same, it's not exactly direct like this, and it's certainly not Jehovah touching Daniel's mouth, it's a someone who is sent.

Ezekiel eats a scroll, he sees a hand extended to him with a scroll rolled up like this, and he says, here, eat this, and he does. But that's for a later class, because Jeremiah also eats a scroll. So we're gonna talk about eating scrolls later, I know you're getting hungry.

But Isaiah and Jeremiah are both given words to speak during these encounters, Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah chapter 1, that are not pleasant. Isaiah in chapter 6 is told, you remember because he hears this conversation, Isaiah does, he's witnessing it, and there's a voice says, who will go for us and who can we send? And Isaiah says, ename me, send me. Now we don't, we were talking about this before the class, not a lot of prophets say, ooh, ooh, I'll go.

Isaiah chapter 6, he says, send me, I'll go. So here's what he's told, here's what you're gonna do, Isaiah, you're gonna fatten the heart of this people. I'm not a cardiologist, but that's not good, to have fat around your heart.

Says, make heavy their ears, this is literally what he tells him, and blind their eyes. Make their heart fat, make their ears heavy, and their eyes blind. Why, you might ask? Why? Says

further, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and turn and be healed.

So Isaiah has a really bad mission here, he's told to put in place certain things which will prevent repentance. So Isaiah has a good question, he says, how long? And the answer is, until an exile. Now the question is, how long, what exile are we talking about? Let's say this happens in the 700s BC, Jeremiah is in the 600s BC, is it the same? In other words, when Isaiah puts this into place, we have an exile that takes place in Isaiah's day, but you might think that after that exile, this fat heart, heavy ear, blinded eyes thing goes away.

But it's interesting to me that Jeremiah sees in his day, encounters people with fat hearts, heavy ears, and eyes that are blind. They have eyes, but they just can't see. They have ears, but they're not listening.

Now, this is not a new thing. If you go back to Deuteronomy 29 for Deuteronomy 29 for Moses, according to the text, it appears to be, it's at least intended to be presented as the words of Moses, that the people have not been given a heart to know, eyes to see, or ears to hear. Of course, it does have the qualifying red flag of anachronism that says, to this day.

But nonetheless, in the book of Deuteronomy, we encounter the same thing. Fat heart, heavy ears, blind eyes, we see it in Isaiah's day, fat heart, heavy ears, blind eyes, we see it in Jeremiah's day, and guess what? At least according to gospel narratives, we see it then too. Now, according to what is given to us in the text, this ability to understand, see, and hear is something that must be given by God.

The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Well, the Isaiah 6. To put my words in your mouth means to prepare one for a prophetic career. In other words, the words that you speak, Jeremiah, are not your own, they will be the one, they will be the words of the one who sent you, right? You will go, he says.

God tells him, you will go and you will speak whatever it is I tell you to speak, you will go where I send you. So the words that he speaks are not his own when he is speaking, O Amar Yehovah. My words in your mouth.

Go to Deuteronomy chapter 18, Deuteronomy chapter 18, and I want you to just go with me to verse 18. By the way, this is the exact phrase that it is given in Jeremiah 1.9. Jeremiah 1.9, God says, I will put my words in your mouth, right? That exact phrase is found only one other time, and you're about to hear it. Deuteronomy 18.18, I will raise up for them a prophet from among their countrymen like you, but Moses and me.

And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them everything that I command him. Ladies and gentlemen, the prediction in Deuteronomy 18 is that a prophet like Moses will be raised up at a certain time, and God will put his words in his mouth, will command him what to speak, and that is fulfilled to the word only by Jeremiah. Now, I know a lot of traditional Judaism teachers and other people say Joshua is the prophet like Moses.

Joshua is not the prophet like Moses. I will extend the teaching on that and be very thorough to show you that that is not the case. The prophet like Moses, the one who is raised up, and the one that God puts his words in his mouth is Jeremiah.

Now, by the way, I want you, there is one other verse. You have Jeremiah 1.9, put the words in your mouth. You have Deuteronomy 18, the prophet like Moses, put the words in your mouth.

There's one other passage that talks about God putting words in the mouth using the same vocabulary. Some of you are out there going, uh-uh, this prophet is speaking the word of the Lord. Not what I'm saying.

You have to be specific when you study the Bible. You have to interpret the Bible from the words in connection with the words and on the basis of the words. There is no room for you to inject or interject and put things in the text which are not intended.

We want to be precise. We're looking for the prophet like Moses. We have to say, what does it say he will do or say? And the language is perfect.

But one other verse, go with me to Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 5, Jeremiah 5 and verse 14. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of armies says, because you have spoken this word, behold I am making my words fire in your mouth. And this people would and it will consume them.

5 verse 14. This word, he says, I am putting. He said, doesn't mean I put or I had put.

It's not past tense. It's not future tense. It is present and active.

He says, I am putting my words in your mouth for fire. So God twice tells Jeremiah that exact prophet like Moses phrase. I'm gonna put my words in your mouth.

And so therefore we have it. Now again, other passages do use different language, different vocabulary to say that God's words are in the mouth of man. In a prophetic word to those who chase righteousness, those who pursue righteousness in Isaiah 51.

Go to Isaiah 51 with me. We get something very similar. Isaiah 51.

Listen to me, you chasers of righteousness, who seek the Lord. Now he goes on to say that these people who know of righteousness, down in verse 16, down in verse 16, it says, let me scroll down, and I have put my words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of my hand to establish the heavens and to, literally it says, to plant the heavens and to found the earth and to say to Zion, you are my people. So here we have a prophetic word to those who chase after righteousness and who know righteousness, people who have the Torah in the heart.

Isn't that the goal? Just stick with me. We're talking about riddles and prophecy. Who are these people? I have put or placed.

Here it's seem. I put, place my words in your mouth, right? Now it's a little bit different language than what we see in Deuteronomy 18 and Jeremiah 1. But here it says seem. I put my words, place my words in your mouth, and then now look.

(53:12 - 1:04:14)

Later, by the way, so who is this? Who is he talking to? We're gonna get into this. I'm gonna show you some things in prophecy that must be connected based on language, based on vocabulary, words, and phrases that help us identify things as we work our way through. Go with me to Isaiah 59.

I know this is a class on Jeremiah, but we have to talk about riddles in prophecy, so we have to bring in these other prophets, because they are speaking, they represent the same one who commissioned them. And this is why, like the Ebionites and so forth, referred to a spirit which hastened through the ages. They talked about the spirit of the true prophet.

I'll get it. Later in Isaiah 59, we read Isaiah 59 and go to verse 21. Let's start in, let me see, go to verse 20.

There's a redeemer will come to Zion, verse 20, and he will come to Zion a goel for those in Jacob who turn from wrongdoing declares the Lord. Now look, the Redeemer is coming not for Zion. He's not coming for all of the people.

He's coming for a group. Who is he coming for? Who is the goel coming for? This is not a Messiah. Goel is something different.

Redeemer. We're gonna keep getting into all these terms. You need to know this is no Messiah here.

This is a higher job, if you will, than a Messiah. A goel will come for those who turn from wrongdoing. Now listen to this, verse 21.

As for me, this is my covenant with them. With who? With the ones who turn from wrongdoing. Get it? You have to read it.

Says the Lord, my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, put in your mouth. Same seam, same word is used in Isaiah 51. They shall not depart from your mouth, nor the mouth of your offspring, nor the mouth of your offspring's offspring, says the Lord from now and forever.

So God says that he is a goel, a redeemer is coming for those who turn from sin, and it's this group that he makes a covenant with. We're gonna talk about what covenant he makes with them, but it's in this collected group, it's not an individual, that the goel is going to put the words in the mouth of these people, right? Now, God's word in the mouth of man, or mankind, I'm using it in a generic term, generic sense, indicates prophecy. We see that in Exodus chapter 4, verse 15, and we see in the book of Numbers chapter 11, verse 29, that Moses wished that all God's people were prophets, and that his spirit would be on them all.

So, Jeremiah, based on a comparison using Deuteronomic language, the language of Deuteronomy, is, or was, the prophet like Moses. He's the one who fits the bill. He's the one that matches the prophecy.

It was the word Natan. I am putting, placing, giving, setting the word Natan. I'm giving you my words in your mouth, and he is thereby made a Navi to the nations, a prophet to the nations.

He's known by God before he was set apart, or he's known and set apart before he was born, I meant to say. He's gonna say whatever God tells him to say. He's told further in verse 8, don't fear from their faces.

Now, whose faces? Is it the bad idolaters of the nations that he's not supposed to fear? That's not who's out for Jeremiah's life. It's the religious folks that are trying to get him. It's the wicked priesthood that is coming for Jeremiah.

It's the religious leaders. That's who is always the enemy of God's truth. It's the religious leaders.

It's today like that, it was then like that. He doesn't say, hey, be careful when you go to those nations because those guys are pagan. They're gonna be setting up trees in their house and decorating them.

They're bad, they're not holy like us. No! It's the people of the temple he's telling him to watch out for. Some of the prophets are told, look, if I sent you to a place where you needed a translator that didn't understand your language, they would listen to you.

That's not, I'm talking the hard group. The audience I'm sending you to has a fat heart, heavy ears, and blind eyes. They refuse to listen, they stop their ears, they've brought a sword out against the prophets that I sent.

Last week I went through all those verses over and over. God said, I got my prophets up early, they're rising early, they're speaking to you, and the people will not listen. I'm not talking about the nations, I'm talking about Israel.

He says, don't fear from their faces, ki itka'ani. Ki itka'ani, because I'm with you. This phrase is used repeatedly in Jeremiah.

Ki itka'ani. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 8. Here are the instances. Do not be afraid of them, don't fear their faces.

Ki itka'ani, for I am with you to save you, says Jehovah. Look down at verse 19. They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to save you, declares the Lord.

Ki itka'ani. Now who is it that's gonna fight against him? If you go up one verse, I'm gonna read this later, the kings of Judah, its leaders, its priests, and the people of the land. That's who's gonna fight against you.

Next words, and they will fight against you. You get it? The message from God to the people that are called God's people, that's the people who don't want to hear it. The whole batch is rotten.

It's bad. He's already divorced the northern kingdom, and I know some people say, no, God never divorces people. You better read Jeremiah.

Better read it. Now look down at chapter 15, Jeremiah 15, verse 20. Then I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze, and though they fight against you, they will not prevail over you.

Ki itka'ani, for I am with you to save you and rescue you, declares the Lord. Wonder who's fighting against him. Probably some pagan.

Jeremiah chapter 30. Jeremiah chapter 30 and verse 11. For I am with you, declares the Lord, to save you, for I will completely destroy all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely, but I will discipline you fairly and will by no means leave you unpunished.

Hey, wait a minute. This is a riddle. For I am with you to save you, for all the nations where I scattered you.

Now he's talking to a group. Where it says, I am with you, where it says, where I am with you, this now is referring to, very interestingly, a group. But it's in the singular.

Ki itka'ani, same phrase, but he's talking, if you back it up, he's talking to Jacob. Talking about Jacob. Look at verse 10.

Do not fear Jacob my servant. Huh. We're going to talk about the servant.

The servant mentioned in the Bible. We see the servant over and over. Who is it? Is it Israel? Is it Jeremiah? Is it Jesus of Nazareth, as Christianity puts forward? Who is it? We have to get into this.

We see it. Here it says, Jacob my servant, as it does in many of the servant songs of Isaiah, but people can jump to conclusions wrongly. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 46.

Jeremiah 46 and verse 28. Jacob my servant, the servant of the Lord. Do not fear, declares Jehovah, ki because I am with you.

Ki itka'ani, singular, because I am with you, addressing Jacob as a one, as a person. He's talking to the nation, the servant nation. Now look with me at chapter 42.

Jeremiah 42. Let me make sure this is the right verse. Yeah.

Jeremiah 42 11. Do not be afraid of the King of Babylon whom you are now fearing. Do not be afraid of him, declares the Lord, for I am with you to save you and rescue you from his hand, because I am with you.

Now here it says ki itka'ani. It's plural there, because I'm with y'all. I'm with you.

(1:04:14 - 1:06:01)

Plural, to save you. Lehoshi, Israel. Now by the way, in verse 10 of that passage it says, I'll plant you and root you.

That's interesting, because Jeremiah's mission, remember, part of it is to plant, to build and to plant. So this is part of his mission. This is, as you can tell, later.

Now one thing, go to Isaiah just quickly, because I did a search for ki itka'ani, because I am with you. I want you to look at Isaiah 43, Isaiah 43 verse 5. Do not fear, for I am with you. Sounds very interesting.

Sounds very similar to what we read in Jeremiah. I will bring your offspring from the east and gather you from the west, I'll say to the north. Give them up into the south, don't hold them back.

Bring my sons from afar, my daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, etc. Here, Jacob and Israel are addressed, it's talking about Jacob and Israel, but it says ki itka'ani. Now, in the course of this study, we will carefully be noting and connecting words and phrases that make the point that connect us between Jeremiah and the words of Isaiah, and the servant within Isaiah, and the servant within Jeremiah, and other passages.

(1:06:01 - 1:10:03)

When you begin to unwrap this, you begin to connect based on words and phrases, your eyes become open as to the identity of these people. Jeremiah, the language directed to Jeremiah himself, is very similar to that which is directed to Israel and Jacob, and to the servant within Israel are the servant songs of Isaiah. At times the language is exact, at times not always.

In fact, there is a theory that we're going to entertain later that says Deutero, or second Isaiah, Isaiah 40 through 66, is a portion of Isaiah which was written by Jeremiah. Some have proposed that Jeremiah is writing about the servant in there, the servant songs are associated with Jeremiah so closely. In fact, by the way, we won't do this today and get into it in any depth, but if you read Jeremiah 11 about being like a lamb brought to the slaughter, very close to the language we see in the suffering servant passages.

Now, as Jeremiah is promised that God will be with him, so too Israel, Jacob, servant, they're all given the same phrase. Now remember, I'm looking for specific verbatim phrases, so I'm not entertaining similar phrases which are not so close with the vocabulary. For Exodus chapter 3 verse 12, it says, "...because I will be with you." Exodus 3 12.

It means the same thing, really, but the language is different, so I want to focus on identical language. Go with me to Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 10. Jeremiah 1 verse 10.

It says, "...see, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, to tear down, to destroy, to overthrow, to build, and to plant." So he says, "...I've appointed you this day over nations," and he gives him the mission in three phrases. Now, but I want you to notice this, even in these words of impending bad, like if you're Jeremiah and God tells you, I'm going to use you to pluck, to break, to destroy, and to overthrow, and also to build and to plant, you're going to think this is a very heavy job, right? And it is, but there is always, hear me, there is always a chance. The choice is to the word of the Lord through the prophet.

Go with me to Jeremiah 18. Jeremiah 18. I want to read verses 1 through 11.

"...the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, go down to the potter's house." This is something he's literally going to do, go to the place where they make the pottery. "...and there I will announce my words to you." So I went down to the potter's house, notice first person telling us this. There he was making something on the wheel, but the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter, so he remade it into another vessel as it pleased the potter to make.

(1:10:03 - 1:14:35)

You ever see somebody working clay on a wheel? I've watched people do this, and there are times, I've done this, I've made it, I love this, I don't do it now, but I've done it a couple of times. You know, it's spinning, and in the ancient world they would pump it, make it spin, but if you go too far or something, it gets out and it messes up. So what do you do? You mash it back together, throw it down, and you start over.

That's what Jeremiah just saw. "...then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Am I not able, house of Israel, to deal with you as this potter does?" What? In other words, he's saying, I can take this lump of clay, I can take you, smash you, and start over. Is that not what that means? Alright.

"...Am I not able to deal with you as this potter does, declares the Lord. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hands, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to tear down, or to destroy it." Those are the three words that come from his charge.

You know, uproot, destroy, etc. "...If that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I plan to bring on it. Or, at another moment, I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build or to plant it.

But if it does evil in my sight by not obeying my voice, then I will relent of the good with which I had said that I would bless it. Now, speak to the men of Judah against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, This is what the Lord says. Behold, I am forming a disaster against you and devising a plan against you.

Now turn back each of you from his evil way and correct your ways and your deeds." In other words, Jeremiah, your job is to pluck up, to break down, to destroy, and to overthrow, to build, and to plant. All of those are your job. I'm going to tell you to tell them to straighten their act up.

If they don't, you're going to pluck up, break down, destroy, and overthrow. If they do respond, you're to build and to plant. Now, he says, I want you to understand this, if I've decreed bad and make amends, bad's off the table.

But if I decree good and they do bad, then the good's off the table. The action, the response to the hearer of the Word of the Lord is what determines whether good or bad happens. That's why a lot of prophecy students are confused on their eschatology, because they take a verse and they read it and they fit all these things together that may or may not have to come to pass.

That's right, I just said that. For instance, if you look at the last part of Malachi, it says, Behold, days are coming. I will send Eliyahu, I will send Elijah the prophet, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers of the children and children of the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a band of utter destruction.

So what does that mean? It means that Elijah, according to Malachi, is coming, and his message will be to turn the parents to the children and children. If they accept it, all good. If they don't, destruction is coming.

So what prophecy students will do to their own confusion is they say, well, this has to happen, and then this has to happen, because you have to destroy it before you build it, blah blah blah, but they're just reading it because they don't understand. Go with me to Jeremiah 31, I have a few more things to squeeze in. Jeremiah 31 verse 28, and Jeremiah 31 28, Just as I have watched over them to uproot them, tear them down, ruin, destroy, and bring disaster on them, so will I watch over them to build and to plant them, declares the Lord.

(1:14:35 - 1:21:33)

Interesting. So he's saying, at this point, he says this must come after they've been uprooted and torn down and ruined, destroyed, faster, but he says by the same token, I'm promising that I'm going to rebuild and plant. The offer is presented, the caution is given, the warning is sounded.

Remember, Ezekiel says that, I have to warn them, because if he doesn't warn, the blood's on his hand, because disaster is coming, unless they repent. See, if they repent, now no one can choose for the people. No one can take on the punishment for the people.

I know that people think that it can, but they can't. Someone cannot take the sin of the group, it's not possible. I'm gonna prove it.

Look at verse 29. In those days, they will no longer say, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, but it is the children's teeth that have become blunt. Alright? Everyone will die for his own wrongdoing, each person who eats the sour grapes, his own teeth will become blunt.

This is in Ezekiel as well. The point being, the parents, the kids are saying, hey it's not our fault the economy's messed up, it's not our fault this or that, our parents did that, they did the bad and we reap the benefit for it. Well, what this is saying is that is not going to be the case.

In fact, it's called a proverb that comes in late, this idea. But notice what immediately follows that each person will die for their own sin. You know what the next thing Jeremiah says? Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they broke though I was a husband of them, but this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days.

I will put my Torah within them and write it on their heart and I will be their God and they shall be my people. They will not teach again each man his neighbor, each man his brother,

saying know the Lord for they'll all know me from the least of them to the greatest, for I will forgive their wrongdoing and their sin I will remember no more. In other words, the very most many people in our culture think that the New Covenant has to do with someone taking other people's sins, but here the New Covenant is presented right after it says that can't happen.

It couldn't get any closer in the text, you couldn't put it any closer to the New Covenant promise than it is, like the verse right before it says it. Now, remember the goal of the New Covenant is that God desires to forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. And how is that brought about? I showed you last week's class that the goal of Jeremiah's scroll, chapter 36, it says perhaps, I'm going to give you these warnings of dire things that are coming, you say this to them, perhaps they'll repent and then I'll be able to forgive their sin and their iniquity I'll remember no more.

Now, I know we had a question pop up and somebody said, well you said able. In other words, people say, well I think that God is able to do anything. God puts in the Scripture, if we look at this as what God is telling us, it is contingent.

His forgiveness is contingent on repentance. You say, well could God forgive sin without repentance? Could God create a rock so big that he couldn't pick it up? These are philosophical questions. Biblically, the question is, how will God do it? He will forgive sins, he can forgive sin, but he says he only will forgive sin when the people repent.

Now, remember the goal of Jeremiah's scroll, the goal of Jeremiah's scroll is the hope that they will repent, God will forgive their sin and iniquity. This goes back to Moses's request in chapter 34 of Exodus, 34 9, where it says, oh that they would, etc. Now, Jeremiah has to warn the people.

He is told, don't fear them, don't cajole them, no sugarcoating. You're gonna go where I tell you to go, you're gonna say what I tell you to say, don't be afraid, destruction is imminent if they don't repent. That's the message.

Pretty cut-and-dry. And a priest from Anatote, from a forsaken, cut-off line, is the one that's going to bring the message. Now, according to Kings and Chronicles, the press release coming out of the administration, it says everything's going fine, all the trends are going in the right direction, the state of the Union is good, but Jeremiah and Zephaniah and God don't say that.

How many of you know that in times before now, now and in the future, a government might say that everything is great? You ever hear the expression, figures don't lie but liars use figures? People present the argument the way it makes their administration look great. We see that in Kings and Chronicles. You read Kings and Chronicles, the whole country from north to south has bowed down and stood up and taken a covenant on, and Chronicles even says that during the whole time of Josiah's reign, the people did good, they did well.

(1:21:34 - 1:23:29)

Not with Jeremiah, God, and Zephaniah. Jeremiah's first two visions in chapter one underscore the urgency of his mission. He says, what do you see, Jeremiah? I see an almond branch.

He says, that's right, because I'm gonna hasten my word to perform it. Vision number one, almond branch, the word almond and the word for urgency are the same word. He says, I'm gonna hasten, it's called, an almond tree is called the hastening fruit.

It's one of the first things to show up in the spring. There's another reason, perhaps, that the almond branch is shown to Jeremiah at the beginning of his prophetic ministry, because back in the book of Numbers, the book of Numbers chapter 17, we have the branch which budded, remember was an almond, and it belonged to the Levites. It's just a note that I have in my thinking.

Is this God saying to Jeremiah, a priest from Anatote, that it is your house that I will use to give the best chance that the people will repent. The priest of Anatote, Hilkiah is his father, Hilkiah finds a scroll, that's coming. So he's shown an almond tree.

The dire prediction of the coming destruction is shown to him in his second vision. It's a pot that's tilted from the north, indicating that destruction is coming from the north. So it's coming soon, and it's coming surely, destruction is coming.

That's Jeremiah's message. The word coming out of the palace is that things are going well. The word coming out of God's mouth into Jeremiah's is things are not well at all.

(1:23:34 - 1:25:08)

Enemies are coming to surround Jerusalem, a place filled with wicked idolaters, people who have forsaken God, and then Jeremiah is told to prepare himself for what is it. Look at Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 17. Jeremiah, this is to Jeremiah, now gird your waist and arise and speak to them all that I command you.

Be not dismayed before them or I will make you dismayed before them. Now behold, I have made you today like a fortified city and like a pillar of iron and walls of bronze against the whole land to the king of Judah, to its leaders, to its priests, and to the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you for I am with you to save you, declares the Lord.

Jeremiah, get ready because what's coming is going to be hard. The people who will fight against you are the kings, the priests, the prophets, the people of the land, your people. That's who's going to fight against you.

Jeremiah has to get ready, and if you join me next week, we'll see how ready Jeremiah is. Shabbat Shalom.