

The Miracle of Restoration

Jeremiah's life and Jeremiah's book are a single entity. He wrote what he lived, and he lived what he wrote. His ministry spanned one of the most troublesome periods in Jewish history – the decades leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, followed by the nation's exile in Babylon.

Everything that could go wrong did go wrong. And Jeremiah was stuck in the middle of it, preaching and praying, writing and suffering, being ridiculed and reviled, surviving persecution and destruction all around, and ultimately trying to hold on to God's promises in the middle of Judah's darkest days.

Jeremiah was called "the weeping prophet" with good reason – there was a lot to cry about! The Jews wouldn't listen to his preaching, the political system of the day was against him, he was viciously persecuted because of his stand for God, and many false prophets tickled the people's ears with what they wanted to hear instead of what they needed to hear.

Jeremiah 23:21-22 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

It certainly looked like Jeremiah was on the losing side! Even God's people had backslidden into apathy, worldliness and outright sin – and they rejected any notion that God would ever punish them for it. In a world like that, Jeremiah had the most unpopular message of all – YOU MUST REPENT!

As the armies of Babylon tightened the noose around the city of Jerusalem, Jeremiah's preaching angered the king so much that he locked him up!

Jeremiah 32:2-3 (KJV) For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Jeremiah 32:2-3 (MSG) At that time the army of the king of Babylon was holding Jerusalem under siege. Jeremiah was shut up in jail in the royal palace. Zedekiah, king of Judah, had locked him up, complaining, "How dare you preach, saying, 'God says, I'm warning you: I will hand this city over to the king of Babylon and he will take it over.

WHY DO YOU PREACH? HOW DARE YOU PREACH?

Don't tell us what we have to do! Don't tell us that judgment is imminent! Don't infringe on our lifestyle and our comfort! Don't tell us we're sinning! What good does preaching do anyway? Why bother with all these services? Why strive for worship, prayer, giving, holiness and faithfulness? Why try to build a church in a culture that doesn't care? Why keep trying to shake apathetic saints out of their lethargy? Why keep talking about the Rapture?

With imminent destruction staring Jerusalem in the face, God told Jeremiah to do something absolutely ridiculous ... MAKE AN INVESTMENT!

Jeremiah 32:6-7 And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it.

Jeremiah 32:13-15 And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

With imminent destruction staring us in the face, God tells His church to do something absolutely ridiculous. Don't lock the doors and hold on until the Rapture! Keep investing in people! Buy into them! It looks like they're going to reject and ridicule you – but do it against all reason and common sense! Take everything you've fought for and paid for, and put it in an earthen vessel. It looks like you'll lose everything if you do that, but God says that your investment is going to be eternally valuable! Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land! The enemy may besiege us and even win some battles ... but revival shall happen again in this land!

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Jeremiah 32:27 Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

But here's the greatest miracle – to everyone who has ever tried and failed – your RESTORATION miracle is going to be even greater than your SALVATION miracle! Don't ask me how, but God said He would do it!

Jeremiah 23:7-8 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.