

JEREMIAH – A TYPE OF CHRIST

How many times have you or I ever been confused with the Lord Jesus Christ? Not as many times as we would like, that's for sure! Yet when the Lord Jesus asked His disciples who men thought He was, they said, "...Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matt.16:14). That spoke well of Jeremiah, didn't it? The people evidently saw things in the Lord Jesus that reminded them of him. In this short article we are going to examine some of the amazing parallels between the Lord Jesus and this great Old Testament prophet, so that we can also appreciate just how much this man was a foreshadow of our Saviour.

First of all, **Jeremiah was evidently a man chosen by God for his ministry.** In Jer.1:4-5 we read, "*Then the LORD came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.'*" Here we see the Lord revealing something of His eternal plan to Jeremiah, which included setting him apart to be His inspired

spokesman to Israel – and even the Gentile nations (EG: Jer.25)! He was a man chosen by God. 'Appointed and anointed,' as we might say.

This was true of our Lord Jesus Christ too. The apostle Peter tells us He was, "*chosen by God and precious.*" (1 Pet.2:4). It is important to remember that the coming of God's Son into the world was not an afterthought in the Father's mind, once Adam had sinned. No! God had chosen His Son to be our Saviour in His eternal counsel and planning. He was "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" (Rev.13:8) Like Jeremiah, He was chosen by God especially for His ministry.

Then we see that **Jeremiah was led like a lamb to the slaughter.** In fact, those are similar to his very own words. In chapter 11:19 of his prophecy he said, "*But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, 'Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off*

from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more." Because of his faithful ministry, rebuking Israel for her sin, some of the leaders had called for Jeremiah's demise. It seems people didn't appreciate Biblical preaching even then! Yet this, of course, perfectly parallels the Lord Jesus who was also, "*led as a lamb to the slaughter*" (Is.53:7). Remember how Mark said that the religious leaders, "*sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them...*" (Mk.12:12)? He also was targeted for His 'pointed preaching.' The difference being that the Lord Jesus did actually die, whereas Jeremiah was preserved.

Following on from that, consider how **Jeremiah wept for the city of Jerusalem which was going to be punished for its sins.** In Jer.13:17 he said, "*...My soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.*" Herbert Lockyer has written: "*Jeremiah's most conspicuous Christ-like characteristic was his sorrow for the sins of those around him...Both of his books –*

Jeremiah and Lamentations, are drenched with his tears. He was indeed 'The prophet of the Broken Heart.'" In this way again, the 'weeping prophet' was a type of the Lord Jesus who famously wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). However, as Herbert Lockyer goes on to point out, "*But Jesus went further than Jeremiah in that He not only shed His tears over those who rejected his witness – at Calvary He shed His blood for their sins and salvation.*"

Additionally, **Jeremiah proclaimed that the temple would be destroyed because of the sins of the people.** Through his lips the Lord said, "*I have forsaken My house [ie, the temple in Jerusalem], I have left my heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.*" (Jer.12:7). Not long after these words were spoken Jeremiah recorded how Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, "*burned the house of the LORD...with fire.*" (52:13) and carried away its 'furniture' and precious objects to his own land. The parallel with the Lord Jesus is striking: He also warned the religious leaders as He left the rebuilt temple of His day, "*See! Your house is left to you*

desolate!" (Matt.23:38) In the following moments He went on to describe to His disciples how, *"not one stone shall be left here upon another,"* (Matt. 24:2). Sure enough, in 70 AD the temple was destroyed just as He had said. The Roman soldiers burned the temple and carried away its artefacts, as recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus.

Then consider that, on one occasion **Jeremiah hid himself for safety.** *"Then the princes said to Baruch, 'Go and hide, you and Jeremiah; and let no one know where you are.'"* (Jer.36:19). This was not cowardice on the part of Jeremiah, but God's will. We know this because when the king sent his men to capture them, *"the LORD hid them."* (v26). Similarly, there were occasions when our Saviour had to hide Himself from His would-be assassins. John's gospel records *"Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them."* (Jn.8:59).

Interestingly, it was also **Jeremiah who prophesied the New Covenant** by name in his book. Other

prophets mention the facets of this covenant in their works, but Jeremiah actually prophesied the final covenant itself. *"Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah..."* (Jer.31:31). This was what the Lord Jesus Himself came to bring in through His death on the cross. He told His disciples, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* (Matt.26:28). The Lord was using the very words Jeremiah had spoken centuries before as He talked to His disciples at the Last Supper.

We should also mention that **Jeremiah was a faithful shepherd who followed the Lord and did not lay down his ministry in times of danger.** He once prayed to the Lord, *"As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows You..."* (Jer.17:16). This was true. Even when he felt like giving up, he responded to the Lord's chastening and continued his ministry right through the difficult days leading up to Israel's exile. He was never popular, but he was always faithful. The same could be said of the Lord

Jesus in an even greater way. Describing Himself He said, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* (Jn.10:11). He was the ultimate faithful Shepherd who remained true to His commission, even dying for our salvation.

Finally, let us remember that **Jeremiah spoke out boldly against the false prophets of his day.** In Jer.28 we read how he 'did battle' with Hananiah who deceived the people into thinking that God would not punish them for their sins and even promised them peace instead! (Sounds like some preachers we hear today, doesn't it?) He also spoke out with words like these: *"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" says the LORD.*" (23:1) and, *"Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them...And as for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' I will even punish that man and his house."* (23:32,34). His brave stand reminds us of how the Lord Jesus also spoke out against false teachers and false shepherds in the Gospels. In fact the whole chapter

of Matthew 23 is Christ's unbridled attack on the Scribes and Pharisees, where He even dared to call them *"hypocrites"* and *"blind guides"* (v24-25) to their faces! We wonder how His teaching would go down in many pulpits today! Yet it was inspired of God and true, just like Jeremiah's.

We could go on, but you get the idea. Jeremiah's life was a marvellous foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ in so many ways. As one writer has said, *"Indeed, it is not too much to say that on a small scale that Life which is above all other lives is reproduced in this prophet."* (Dr Moorehead). Perhaps that will help us appreciate Jeremiah more when we read his long and weighty prophecy. Hopefully it will also inspire those of us who know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour to try and be more like Him too. It would be wonderful if people saw more similarities between us and the Lord, as they did in the disciple's day, and that they would make a direct connection between us and Him. May it be so.

Jon Ikin

(First appeared in Prophetic Witness magazine – March 2013)