

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."
Jeremiah 1:5-6*

CALLLED AND COMMISSIONED

*14 Principles for Budding Prophets
From the Call of Jeremiah*

LEE A. HOWARD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JEREMIAH'S CALL

[Chapter 1 Introduction](#)

[Chapter 2 Prophetic Time and Purpose](#)

[Chapter 3 The Word of the Lord, Saying](#)

[Chapter 4 Jeremiah's Response to God's Call](#)

[Chapter 5 The Lord's Reply to Jeremiah's Excuses](#)

JEREMIAH'S COMMISSION

[Chapter 6 The Six-Fold Commission](#)

[Chapter 7 The Word of the Lord, Seeing](#)

[Chapter 8 The Prophet, God's Watchman](#)

[Chapter 9 Growing In the Ministry of the Prophet](#)

[14 Principles for Budding Prophets](#)

-

Are You Called To Be A Prophet?

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It's no easy thing to be called to any fivefold office, especially that of prophet. Perhaps you've picked up this book because you already have an inkling that God is calling you to prophetic ministry.

God calls and commissions His prophets in various ways, but the underlying principles are consistent with Scripture. One of the best examples of God's call and commission to the prophetic office is revealed in the book of Jeremiah.

If you are called to be a prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ, this book will help you discern how God summons and enables His spokesmen.

Since we will be studying the call and commission for prophetic ministry in the life of Jeremiah, let's begin with some historical background.

Jeremiah's Ministry

Jeremiah was a priest and prophet whose ministry began about 626 B.C. By nature he was timid and given to self-analysis and -criticism.

Anguish of spirit characterized Jeremiah as "the weeping prophet." He wept much because God had called and commissioned him to announce the destruction of Judah and judgment against many nations. If he could speak to us today, he might say, "I was called to preach to a falling nation, and all I could do was prepare them for what was about to happen." [1]

Judah had grown corrupt under the reign of evil king Manassah. Because of this, God raised up Jeremiah to deliver His indictment against them. Judah's rebellion brought on the curses of the covenant described in Leviticus 26:31-33 and Deuteronomy 28:49-68. Ultimately, the people of Jerusalem would be taken captive by the Babylonians.

Because of this impending judgment, Jeremiah warned the people that the only way to escape God's wrath was to genuinely repent and submit to His will.

Jeremiah fervently preached a message of holiness and exhorted the people to righteousness. He condemned idolatry and denounced false

prophets. Because of his outspoken stand for purity, he was often surrounded by conflict—especially with the leaders of his nation (see Jer. 36-38).

Since God had called Jeremiah to such a grave task, He frequently affirmed Jeremiah's call and appointment as a prophet.[2] Jeremiah chapter 1 recounts God's call to Jeremiah and his commission as a prophet to the nations.

We will study chapter 1 verse by verse to learn more about Jeremiah and the call to present-day prophetic ministry. Let's begin with Jeremiah's call.

JEREMIAH'S CALL

CHAPTER 2

PROPHETIC TIME AND PURPOSE

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.

Jeremiah 1:1

Jeremiah was a young priest from a line of priests who ministered in Anathoth, a town about three miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was during his priestly service that God called him to a higher office — prophet.

When God calls a prophet, He unfolds His plan for the prophet at a particular time for a specific purpose. The Lord called Jeremiah during the reign of Josiah king of Judah.

The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah,

Jeremiah 1:2

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah at a specific time in his life and a particular time in the history of Judah. God's prophetic word came during an era when certain events were taking place in Israel. God revealed His word because He hoped to change the outcome of those events. This is the same reason that

God ensured that Esther became queen of Susa.

Esther's Time and Purpose

Because Esther's cousin Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, the king's highest nobleman,

Haman schemed to annihilate all the Jews in the kingdom. Mordecai sent word to Queen Esther, begging her to intercede for their people before the king.

Mordecai's message read, "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise for the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this and for this very occasion?" (Est. 4:14 AMP).

Esther had risen to an influential position at a particular time and

for a specific purpose—to deliver the Jewish people from destruction.

The prophetic anointing falls on those whom God has called as prophets at a specific time. The mantle drops in the Lord's timing, according to His timetable of spiritual history, and for His purposes.

So it was with Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's Time and Purpose

2The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. JEREMIAH 1:2-3

God called Jeremiah to deliver His message during the reign of kings Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, until the time when the people of Jerusalem were exiled to Babylon.

The Lord revealed His word through Jeremiah for a specific purpose. Jeremiah's purpose in life was not just to speak anything, not just to minister as a priest, but to minister as God's prophet to certain people in a certain place with a certain message.

Prophetic Principle #1

God calls each of His prophets at a specific time for a particular purpose. When He calls you, He calls you in time to prepare you for a particular work.

Calling Versus Commissioning

From the time the Lord calls a prophet until He actually commissions that prophet for service, He trains the prophet to use the gifts and abilities he or she will need as a prophet. During this time of testing, God molds the prophet's character and refines the prophet's devotion as a potter would shape an earthen vessel.

The Divine Potter keeps a glob of clay spinning on the wheel until He forms it exactly the way He wants. God intends to make a vessel of a certain size and shape because He needs it for a special purpose.

20But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for

every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 2:20-2 NKJ

God keeps working with His prophets until they are ready for service. Only then does He commission them. At that time He reveals the work He has called them to accomplish.

Each prophet receives an individual commission, certain tasks that God has chosen him—and him alone—to accomplish. That's when God releases the prophet to fulfill what He has called him to do.

Practically, prophets return to be remolded on the potter's wheel many times. And they don't always know from the beginning everything God plans for them to do. Yet God calls them and appoints them at a particular time for a particular purpose. This is the reason they were created, and they know it.

Simeon and Anna's Time and Purpose

Simeon and Anna were prophets who were called and commissioned to minister at a specific time for a specific purpose. Luke chapter 2 tells us about their ministry.

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

LUKE 2:25-26

The Holy Spirit prepared Simeon for prophetic service at a certain point in history—the birth of the Messiah. This time was linked with God's purpose for Simeon.

27Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28Simeon took him in his arms...

LUKE 2:27-28a

When the time was right, God commissioned Simeon to fulfill the prophetic call. The Holy Spirit prompted him to enter the temple courts where Joseph and Mary had brought baby Jesus to be circumcised.

Through the Spirit's revelation, Simeon realized the Christ had

finally arrived. He knew exactly which child he was to go to, take up in his arms, and prophesy over.

28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

29“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

LUKE 2:28-32

Simeon prophesied that this baby was the Savior, sent to all people as the light of the world and the glory of Israel. As he began to utter the words of the Spirit, Simeon knew that he could at last enter his eternal rest, because God’s purpose for him was accomplished.

33The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a

sword will pierce your own soul too.”

LUKE 2:33-35

With a final word to Mary, Simeon fulfilled his prophetic call and commission according to God’s time and purpose. Likewise, Anna consummated her prophetic ministry that same day.

36There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

LUKE 2:36-38

Anna had waited a long time to finish the work the Lord had called her to do. She was very old, but she had not died because her purpose was not yet accomplished. As Simeon had done, she prophesied that this child would be the Redeemer of Israel. Once she had seen the Christ child, no doubt God’s purpose for her was fulfilled.

Just as Simeon and Anna were called to minister at a specific time for a special purpose, Jeremiah was likewise called to minister as God's prophet.

2The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. JEREMIAH 1:2-3

CHAPTER 3

THE WORD OF THE LORD, SAYING

When God calls a prophet, that call is often evidenced by some spiritual gift or ability of the office. This was true of Jeremiah's call.

The word of the Lord came to me, SAYING,
JEREMIAH 1:4

When God called Jeremiah to be His prophet, the word of the Lord came to him, saying. Jeremiah's early training as a prophet was to learn to hear the voice of God.

Prophetic Principle #2

The way prophetic listening often begins is hearing God speak to you about yourself and about what He wants you to do. The prophet must hear the call to heed the call.

This is not to say that prophets are the only ones who hear God's voice. It also does not mean that because you hear God's voice you are called to be a prophet.

All Jesus' sheep can hear His voice (John 10:4). But part of the prophet's equipping is hearing what God is saying, especially for the benefit of others.

4The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:4-5

When God called Jeremiah to the prophetic office, He spoke to him of time and purpose. God told Jeremiah three things:

1. "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and chose you."
2. "Before you were born, I set you apart for My purpose."
3. "I appointed you to be My prophet to the nations."

Let's examine these statements in God's call to Jeremiah.

Called From the Womb

Like Isaiah, God called Jeremiah from the womb (see Isa. 49:5). God had determined His purpose for Jeremiah even before conception. He knew what needed to be done in the world; He saw the ultimate big

picture of world events.

When the time was ripe, God would need someone to speak forth His prophetic word to the nations. Decades before this point in history, God decided that the child born to the priest Hilkiah in Anathoth would be a son. This boy would be named Jeremiah, and he would be a prophet of the Most High God to Judah and the nations.

In these final days God has called forth His prophets from the womb to proclaim His word to the nations.

Undoubtedly, this is one reason Satan has tried so desperately to thwart the final move of the Spirit on earth by preventing our children from fulfilling their call to prepare the way of the Lord. It happened in Moses' time; it happened in Jesus' time. Despite the devil's rage, God's purpose will yet be achieved.

Set Apart From Birth

Jeremiah was not only chosen before he was conceived, but God sanctified him and set him apart for prophetic ministry while he was still in the womb. God set apart from birth only five other men in Scripture: Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul.

God appointed Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations. A prophet is one whom God has called to speak for Him. God spoke to Moses about the ministry of the prophet:

1The Lord said to Moses, Behold, I make you as God to Pharaoh [to declare My will and purpose to him]; and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.

2You shall speak all that I command you, and Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his land.

EXODUS 7:1-2 AMP

A true prophet speaks what God tells him to speak. The prophet declares God's will and purpose. The prophet reveals the mind and heart of God.

There are different kinds of prophets (this list is not all-inclusive):

- Prophets to the local church
- Prophets to the Body of Christ
- Prophets to a city
- Prophets to a particular nation

- Prophets to many nations

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to many nations. Note that a “nation” does not merely mean a country. “Nations” include the people who have descended from a specific lineage or race.

Jeremiah prophesied not only to Judah and Israel, but to Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, the city of Damascus, Kedar and Kazor (cities in Arabia), Elam, and Babylon.

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations, Jeremiah responded to that call.

Prophetic Principle #3

If God calls you to be His prophet, when He calls, you must respond.

CHAPTER 4

JEREMIAH'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

When God called Jeremiah to the prophetic ministry, He said, "I ordained you as a prophet to the nations."

Often when we read the Bible, we don't realize the significance of the words. We have no problem that God told Jeremiah, "You're my prophet to the nations." But what if He were to say that to you? Would you believe Him?

Although Jeremiah believed the Lord, he had a hard time accepting the call.

"Ah, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

JEREMIAH 1:6

Jeremiah responded to the Lord's call with three statements:

1. "Ah, Sovereign Lord," or, "Ah, Lord God!"
2. "I do not know how to speak."
3. "I am only a child."

Let's examine these three statements.

"Ah, Lord God!"

When the Lord called him to ministry, Jeremiah exclaimed, "Ah, Lord God!" Jeremiah knew it was God speaking to him. He didn't cry out, "I bind you, you lying spirit!" He knew Who was talking to him. Why the surprise? Why such distress?

Think for a moment... If God spoke those words to you, whom would you tell? Perhaps Jeremiah remembered the abuse Joseph endured when he told his dream to his eleven brothers (see Gen. 37). Being called to the office of prophet was a serious matter.

Yet Jeremiah loved the Lord. This first statement also means, "Ah, Sovereign Lord.." Jeremiah considered the Lord his authority. Jeremiah knew that God could ask whatever He wanted him to do. And Jeremiah knew what God wanted him to do.

"I Do Not Know How to Speak"

Jeremiah understood—at least in a basic sense— what it meant to

be a prophet. Jeremiah said, “I do not know how to speak.”

As a prophet, Jeremiah would need to speak God’s word to people—not always an easy task. The office of prophet was a powerful position, but it wasn’t popular. Prophets were sometimes killed for what they said.

Jeremiah, who was by nature timid, recoiled at the thought of delivering a message from the Lord, especially to the peoples of other nations. Yet inexperience in speaking wasn’t his only excuse.

“I Am Only a Child”

Jeremiah claimed that he was too young to be a prophet.

Youth and inexperience are no excuses to resist God’s call. Paul advised Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

The Bible doesn’t reveal how old Jeremiah was when the Lord called him to prophetic ministry. If he was ministering as a priest, he was at least thirty years old. Whatever his age, Jeremiah was seeking any out to avoid the call. Although he loved God, he simply lacked experience, knowledge, and confidence.

Jeremiah was honest with the Lord, and there’s nothing wrong with that. After he finished, the Lord replied to his excuses.

CHAPTER 5

THE LORD'S REPLY TO JEREMIAH'S EXCUSES

This is how the Lord responded to Jeremiah's three statements:

7But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. JEREMIAH 1:7-8

The Lord accepted none of Jeremiah's excuses. He said, "Don't say, 'I'm too young.'"

Prophetic Principle #4

God is sovereign—He accepts no excuses. When God calls, you are never too young, too old, or inexperienced. All He wants is obedience. He will teach you how to speak and what to say. Will you heed the call?

God told his prophet to not dwell on what seemed impossible; he was simply to believe and accept God's word to him.

Then God told Jeremiah how to fulfill his call:

- "Go to everyone I send you."
- "Say whatever I command you to say."

"Go to Everyone I Send You"

Prophecy to nations would entail travel, or some other means to get God's message where it was intended to go. This included publishing through his secretary Baruch. Whatever the task, Jeremiah was to go where the Lord sent him.

As the prophet Isaiah said, the only fitting response to the Lord's call is, "Here am I! Send me" (Isa. 6:8).

"Say Whatever I Command You to Say"

God said He would command Jeremiah to say what He told him to say.

Since disobeying the direct command of the Lord would invite dire consequences—remember Jonah? —the messages Jeremiah would deliver might be unpopular. Why else would the Lord command him? If you read the book of Jeremiah, you will see how unpopular some of

his prophecies were.

Indeed, the words Jeremiah delivered were hard to swallow. The Lord warned him that they would be difficult, but promised to deliver him: “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 1:8).

Prophetic Principle #5

God’s prophetic call is simple:

- 1) Go to everyone I send you.
- 2) Say what I tell you to say.

JEREMIAH'S COMMISSION

CHAPTER 6

THE SIX-FOLD COMMISSION

It was only after Jeremiah accepted the call that the Lord commissioned him to speak the prophetic word.

9Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." JEREMIAH 1:9-10

When Jeremiah accepted the call, the Lord said,

"Now I have put my words in your mouth." God opened the door of prophetic utterance for Jeremiah as He did for David: "The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2).

God commissioned Jeremiah the same day He equipped him. The Lord said, "See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms.. "

God set Jeremiah over nations and kingdoms to do six things:

1. **Uproot:** God commissioned Jeremiah to uproot weeds, bitterness, buried wounds, and sins from the hearts of God's people.
2. **Tear Down:** God assigned Jeremiah the task of tearing down the high places of idolatry, strongholds of faithlessness, and the high thoughts of the wicked.
3. **Destroy:** God equipped Jeremiah to destroy the works of the evil one, the plans of the enemy.
4. **Overthrow:** God authorized Jeremiah to overthrow the kingdom of darkness, its bondage and rule.
5. **Build:** God enabled Jeremiah to build a foundation of righteousness, purity, and power on the ground that he would clear.
6. **Plant:** God appointed Jeremiah to plant the word of the Lord to birth His kingdom in the hearts of people.

Notice that two-thirds of these tasks are destructive. Only the remaining one-third are constructive. The spiritual state of Judah was such that it would take twice as much preparation as planting. It always takes longer to prepare an uncultivated field as it does to sow

it.

One responsibility of modern-day prophets is to prepare the land of the Church for the new harvest God wants to cultivate (see 1 Cor. 3:9 NIV). This entails plowing up the fallow soil of unrepentant hearts (Hos. 10:12). Only when the ground is properly prepared can the prophetic word be planted and grow into an abundant harvest (Matt. 13:23).

Prophetic Principle #6

You must accept the call to receive the commission. When God commissions you, He will equip you. When He equips you, He will appoint you to your prophetic tasks.

CHAPTER 7

THE WORD OF THE LORD, SEEING

After the Lord equipped Jeremiah with a prophetic anointing, He tested the equipment.

The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you SEE, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied. JEREMIAH 1:11

When Jeremiah received the call to be God's prophet, the word of the Lord came to him, saying. Jeremiah first learned to hear God's voice.

Verse 11 says, "The word of the Lord came to me: 'What do you see?'"

The word of the Lord SAYING leads to the word of the Lord SEEING.

Prophetic Principle #7

Hearing God's voice and seeing visions are two ways God delivers His prophetic word. You are unique. God will give you the spiritual senses He chooses.

God gave Jeremiah a vision and asked him what he saw. Jeremiah described what he saw: "I see the branch of an almond tree."

Jeremiah described ONLY what he saw, and he added nothing to it.

This is an important lesson in ministering with prophetic vision.

Prophetic Principle #8

The thoughts of God come in different forms. Just as we must not add to or subtract from God's spoken or written word, we must not add to or subtract from God's visual revelation. Pray fervently to know God's heart and to deliver His word with pinpoint accuracy.

Jeremiah saw the branch of an almond tree. The almond branch is mentioned several times in Scripture. Let's study these occurrences and their meanings.

The Almond Branch:

Instrument of Prophetic Illumination

The first time the almond branch is mentioned in Scripture is when God instructed Moses how to make furniture for the tabernacle. One

item for the Holy Place was the golden lampstand, which was fashioned as an almond branch.

31“Make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it. 32Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. 33Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. ... 36The buds and branches shall all be of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold.

37“Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it.”

EXODUS 25:31-33,36-37

This lampstand was fashioned from one piece of pure gold, shaped like almond branches with buds and blossoms. It was always to remain lit in the Holy Place.

The lampstand is a symbol of spiritual illumination in the prophetic ministry.

Just as the seven flames on the golden lampstand were never to go out, the Church needs the constant light of God’s revelation. The prophetic lampstand burns with the oil of the Holy Spirit, lighting the way before it.

The understanding the prophet’s ministry brings has come to the forefront in the Body of Christ. God has raised up His prophets to the local church to speak forth His revelation for this hour.

21[Jesus] said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? 22For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23If any one has ears to hear, let him hear.”

MARK 4:21-23

Prophetic revelation is not meant to be kept hidden.

It must be disclosed in this hour. It will be brought into the open so that those who have ears to hear may receive insight and instruction (1 Cor. 14:6).

They will hear what the Spirit is saying and go forth as Christ's ambassadors.

"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more."

MARK 4:25

The test for the local church in this hour is, What will you do with prophetic revelation? Will the church embrace the ministry of the prophet? More importantly, will the local church let its own prophets arise? And will it use what God reveals through them, or will it merely revel in the excitement of a new type of ministry?

The ministry of the prophet is crucial to the local church. Whether or not it is accepted will determine if a church remains on the cutting edge of kingdom advancement.

Prophets are not people to be feared or viewed with suspicion. Their ministry is one of the fivefold ministries of Christ. Prophets and apostles are foundational to the Church (Eph. 2:20). Pastors and teachers need the ministry of the prophet today. Prophets must work together with the other ministries of the Church, like the five fingers of the hand work together.

All of the fivefold ministries speak for God. However, the ministry of the prophet speaks with a special anointing from the Holy Spirit. In Revelation, the Apostle John tells us,

From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the [sevenfold Spirit] of God. REVELATION 4:5 (alternate translation)

The real golden lampstand stands before God's throne in heaven. It is not merely a fixture made of hammered gold, it is the Spirit of God Himself.

True prophetic illumination originates from the throne of God, and its light blazes with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Zechariah also saw a vision of this golden lampstand.

1Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. 2He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. 3Also there

are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”

4I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”

5He answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied.

6So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

ZECHARIAH 4:1-6

The Amplified version translates verse 6 this way:

“Then he said to me, This [addition of the bowl to the candlestick, causing it to yield a ceaseless supply of oil from the olive trees] is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit [of Whom the oil is a symbol], says the

Lord of hosts.” ZECHARIAH 4:6 AMP

To provide the light the Church needs, the prophets must speak forth God’s message in the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s Spirit who energizes the prophetic lampstand and causes it to burn brightly with the light of revelation.

The Spirit speaks from the throne of God through the anointed prophetic word.

We would do well to listen to His voice today.

Although prophetic illumination is being placed on the lampstand in this hour, the purpose for its exaltation is not to admire the lampstand. It is not to marvel over gifts and demonstrations of power and revelation.

The purpose of prophetic ministry in the local church is to use the light it brings to advance the kingdom of God. Whoever uses prophetic revelation in the proper manner will be blessed with even more illumination of God’s purpose for His Church.

24“Consider carefully what you hear,” [Jesus] continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

MARK 4:24-25

If the local church embraces the ministry of the prophet, it will

receive revelation from the Spirit that it has never received before, and could never receive any other way. If the local church uses that prophetic revelation, even though it may not be much at first, it will receive more and more from God.

However, if a local church hinders its prophets from coming forth or ignores the prophetic word of the Lord, what little revelation it has will be taken away.

The Almond Branch: Authority of the Prophetic Ministry

The almond branch, signifying prophetic illumination, also represents the spiritual authority of the prophet's ministry.

In Numbers 16, four men—Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On—rebelled against Moses' and Aaron's authority. The Lord vindicated His chosen leaders when the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, and all their belongings. Also that day, fire flared out from the Lord's presence and consumed 250 other men who believed they could offer incense before God.

The next day the whole Israelite community rose up and grumbled against Moses and Aaron. If Aaron had not made an atonement offering for the people, they all would have been destroyed. The plague that spread among the Israelites killed 14,700 people before Aaron could offer atonement. The Lord gave Moses a sign for the people.

1The Lord said to Moses, 2“Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. 3On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. 4Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you. 5The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites.”

NUMBERS 17:1-5

The staff is a sign of authority. It has special significance in the prophetic ministry. [3]

6So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their leaders gave him twelve staffs, one for the leader of each of their ancestral tribes, and Aaron's

staff was among them. 7Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the Tent of the Testimony.

NUMBERS 17:6-7

True spiritual leaders will always be found before the Lord. Their authority comes from Him, and they know it.

Regardless of their position or importance in the Church, their ministry must be submitted to Him and His purposes. God will not raise it up in power until it is laid before Him.

8The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff... had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced ALMONDS. 9Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff. NUMBERS 17:8-9

The almond tree is one of the first trees to show life in the spring.[4] Aaron's staff was an almond rod. As it stood the night before the Lord, it had not only sprouted branches, but had budded, flowered, and produced mature fruit!

The almond branch here signifies not only the authority of the prophetic ministry, but the way God uses prophets to bring forth the early revelation of His word among His anointed leaders.

10The Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die." 11Moses did just as the Lord commanded him.

NUMBERS 17:10-11

The authority of the prophet's ministry is a sign to the rebellious. We may think of "the rebellious" as the lost—those outside the Church. But the Lord gave this sign to His own people—the house of God.

In these last days, the ministry of the prophet will be backed with great power and authority. It will predominantly bless. It will also minister the sign of judgment to those in the Church who refuse to repent of rebellion. The judgment of Elymas is coming again (see Acts 13:6-12).

CHAPTER 8

THE PROPHET, GOD'S WATCHMAN

God showed Jeremiah the branch of an almond tree.

11The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

12The Lord said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

JEREMIAH 1:11-12

When Jeremiah saw the vision of the almond branch, he described exactly what he saw. The Lord replied, "You have seen correctly."

When God equipped Jeremiah for the prophetic ministry, He confirmed the vision. He also added the revelation of its meaning: "I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

Prophetic Principle #9

When you receive prophetic visions, allow the Lord to confirm them. Don't conjure up an interpretation. Wait on God to reveal His meaning for His purposes.

The Hebrew word for watching sounds like the Hebrew word for almond tree.[5] It means to be wakeful and alert. Verse 12 in the Amplified says, ".I am alert and active, watching over My word to perform it." Isaiah echoes this thought:

10For as the rain and snow come down from the heavens, and return not there again, but water the earth and make it bring forth and sprout, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

ISAIAH 55:10-11 AMP

Just as Aaron's staff brought forth almonds, so prophetic utterance will bring great effect for the Lord's purpose.

Prophetic Principle #10

God's prophetic word, when spoken out of the mouth of a prophet

anointed by the Spirit, will not only produce its intended result, but will flourish and thrive.

CHAPTER 9

GROWING IN THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

After the Lord explained the first vision to Jeremiah, He revealed a second one.

The word of the Lord came to me again: "What do you see?"

"I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered.

JEREMIAH 1:13

The Lord showed Jeremiah another vision in the same manner as the first, also confirming its meaning.

Prophetic Principle #11

God is a patient teacher to His prophets. He will make sure you know how to use the spiritual equipment He has given you.

God asked, "What do you see?" Jeremiah replied, "I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north." This second vision was more explicit than the first.

Although prophets are called and then commissioned, they grow in the gifts and ministries the Lord has implanted in them.

This is demonstrated in the explanation of the second vision.

14The Lord said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. 15I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the Lord.

"Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah. 16I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made."

JEREMIAH 1:14-16

God revealed to Jeremiah the destruction that would come upon Judah.

Prophetic Principle #12

When the Lord commissions a prophet, He may reveal a particular subject for his or her ministry. He opens the specific realm of ministry

in which the prophet will walk. Then He sends the prophet forth to do His work and speak His word.

“Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you.” ...

JEREMIAH 1:17a

The name Jeremiah means “Jehovah raises up,” “Jehovah throws,” or “Jehovah launches out.”[6] After God commissioned Jeremiah as His prophet, He launched him into ministry.

God may call a prophet a long time before He commissions him. At some point, if the prophet has been faithful, the Lord will release him into ministry.

Prophetic Principle #13

There is a time when the promise of the Lord must come to pass. In the meantime, those who are called must make themselves ready. If the Lord has called you to prophetic ministry, if you remain faithful to Him, He will also commission you to fulfill that ministry.

17“Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. 18Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. 19They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.

JEREMIAH 1:17-19

God charged Jeremiah to not be terrified of those he would minister to, lest He make a fool of him before them. Prophets must come to a place of humble confidence in God and His word to them.

Prophetic Principle #14

Prophetic ministry is more than delivering ear-tickling personal prophecies. There comes a time when a prophet must stand up and do whatever the Lord demands, to say whatever the Lord commands. A true prophet will speak God’s word to tear down, destroy, overthrow, build, and plant.

The Lord told Jeremiah that the message he would deliver would not be received well. Those he would deliver it to would, in fact, fight

against him. What made Jeremiah's mission most difficult was that they were the religious and political leaders of his day.

God is issuing this call again. Present-day prophets will confront corruption in government and the Church. And the leaders must repent, or judgment will fall. It's time for the illicit affair between the Church and right wing Republicanism to end. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). As God promised to defend Jeremiah, He will also strengthen and embolden today's prophets to do the work that He has called them to do.

God is calling forth His Jeremiah prophets in this hour. They will stand up and say everything God commands them to say. They will move in visions and revelations to purify the nations from all that defiles. They will stand like a fortified city, like an iron pillar, like a bronze wall against sin and apostasy in the Church. God is calling to them:

7..."You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. JEREMIAH 1:7b-8

Prophets of the living God, come forth! Stop hiding the light of your revelation under a bowl.

Speak forth the mind of God from His throne by the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The nations need you!

14 PRINCIPLES FOR BUDDING PROPHETS

Prophetic Principle #1

God calls each of His prophets at a specific time for a particular purpose. When He calls you, He calls you in time to prepare you for a particular work.

Prophetic Principle #2

The way prophetic listening often begins is hearing God speak to you about yourself and about what He wants you to do. The prophet must hear the call to heed the call.

Prophetic Principle #3

If God calls you to be His prophet, when He calls, you must respond.

Prophetic Principle #4

God is sovereign—He accepts no excuses. When God calls, you are never too young, too old, or inexperienced. All He wants is obedience. He will teach you how to speak and what to say. Will you heed the call?

Prophetic Principle #5

God's prophetic call is simple:

- 1) Go to everyone I send you.
- 2) Say what I tell you to say.

Prophetic Principle #6

You must accept the call to receive the commission. When God commissions you, He will equip you. When He equips you, He will appoint you to your prophetic tasks.

Prophetic Principle #7

Hearing God's voice and seeing visions are two ways God delivers His prophetic word. You are unique. God will give you the spiritual senses He chooses.

Prophetic Principle #8

The thoughts of God come in different forms. Just as we must not add to or subtract from God's spoken or written word, we must not add to or subtract from God's visual revelation. Pray fervently to

know God's heart and to deliver His word with pinpoint accuracy.

Prophetic Principle #9

When you receive prophetic visions, allow the Lord to confirm them. Don't conjure up an interpretation. Wait on God to reveal His meaning for His purposes.

Prophetic Principle #10

God's prophetic word, when spoken out of the mouth of a prophet anointed by the Spirit, will not only produce its intended result, but will flourish and thrive.

Prophetic Principle #11

God is a patient teacher to His prophets. He will make sure you know how to use the spiritual equipment He has given you.

Prophetic Principle #12

When the Lord commissions a prophet, He may reveal a particular subject for his or her ministry. He opens the specific realm of ministry in which the prophet will walk. Then He sends the prophet forth to do His work and speak His word.

Prophetic Principle #13

There is a time when the promise of the Lord must come to pass. In the meantime, those who are called must make themselves ready. If the Lord has called you to prophetic ministry, if you remain faithful to Him, He will also commission you to fulfill that ministry.

Prophetic Principle #14

Prophetic ministry is more than delivering ear-tickling personal prophecies. There comes a time when a prophet must stand up and do whatever the Lord demands, to say whatever the Lord commands. A true prophet will speak God's word to tear down, destroy, overthrow, build, and plant.