

Contemporary Mystic Christianity

Bible Self-Study Supplement

Jeremiah

The Prophet of Tears

O ye initiates, ye whose breasts are purified, receive this in your souls, as a mystery never to be lost! Reveal it to no profane! Keep and contain it within yourselves, as an incorruptible treasure, not like gold or silver, but more precious than everything besides, for it is the knowledge of the Great Cause, of Nature and of that which is born of both, and if you meet an Initiate, besiege him with your prayers, that he conceal from you no new mystery that he may know and rest not until you have obtained them! For me, although I was initiated in the Great Mysteries by Moses, the Friend of God, yet, having seen Jeremiah, I recognized him not only as an Initiate, but as a Hierophant; and I follow his school.

— Philo

Hezekiah, who reigned in Jerusalem when Samaria fell captive to the Assyrians, was the last of Judah's kings to be buried in an ancient mausoleum prepared for her line of Shepherd Kings. He was succeeded by his son Manasseh who, in turn, was succeeded by his son Amon. Mannasseh was taken into captivity to Babylon while Amon, after a two-year reign, was murdered in his palace.

When a people is ready to receive a new evolutionary impetus destined to set its mark on generations to come, always there is raised up a properly qualified leader and teacher. Such were Amon's son, Josiah, the next king of Judah, and his great Teacher, the holy Jeremiah.

Jeremiah took up the work of the Mysteries where Isaiah laid it down. Under Josiah the Temple was restored and once again the true spiritual significance of the Passover was commemorated. Jeremiah discovered the sacred roll of the true esoteric Law "amid the debris of the Temple" — a phrase of deep esoteric import — and presented it to the king.

At Megiddo Josiah was slain in battle by the Egyptians. One of Jeremiah's most famous lamentations was written to commemorate his passing.

Jehoaliaz, a son of Josiah, succeeded his father but reigned only three months. He was deposed and taken in chains to Egypt, then under Pharaoh-necho. The monarch then gave the throne to Jehoiakim, an elder brother of Jehoahaz, who held it under evil sway for seven years. Jehoiakim was made a tributary to the brilliant young Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, at that time just coming into his own as a great military leader.

Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, also reigned approximately three months, He is often condemned in the writings of Jeremiah under the names of Jehonian and Coniah. Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar during Jehoiachin's reign; he, his family and his retinue were taken prisoners to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, upon the throne. He was Judah's last king and ruled for eleven years. He rashly rebelled against the conqueror so was also taken to Babylon, where he died a miserable death.

Such was the background of the great prophet Jeremiah, the prophet of tears. He surely had cause to, weep.

The childhood home of Jeremiah is said to have been the vast stretches of the Judean desert, where the foundations of his solitary and sorrowful life were laid. The solitude and impenetrable mystery of the wilderness became a part of his very soul. It strengthened and fortified him and lifted his vision beyond the confines of all that is transient and personal. It has truly been said that "a braver, gentler, more exquisite, or more courageous soul has not often walked the earth."

Thus Jeremiah was a grand and solitary figure. Like the Master, he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with

grief." Isaiah sang of the joy and gladness representative of the Spring Equinox; Jeremiah, of the sorrow and sacrifice of the Autumn Equinox. He uses water as a symbol of spirit with the same frequency and importance as Daniel used Fire.

Jeremiah 2:13

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Jeremiah is referring to imperfect bodies subject to death as a result of having been generated without regard to the harmony of stellar vibrations. Before the Fall man knew neither good nor evil; he functioned in unconscious obedience to cosmic Law. By the suffering consequent upon his disobedience to divine will he is learning to differentiate between good and evil. This is his great compensation for all the pain and sorrow he has experienced since the Fall. Bodies conceived without reference to cosmic harmony as registered by the stars have been subject to malformation, disease, disintegration and finally death. The Book of Jeremiah is largely a lament for the sorrowful condition of both earth and mankind because of this great offense against the Law.

Jeremiah 6:19

Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but have rejected it.

Jeremiah outlived the reign of five kings: Josiah, the great grandson of Hezekiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. He was of priestly descent, belonging to a little community of priests located in the village of Anototh about three miles north of Jerusalem, where his family owned land.

When only a youth of twenty he received a prophetic summons. Though young in body, he was what occultists term an "old soul" — that is, one who has had many lives of preparatory service upon the earth — as is shown by his statement: "When the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctioned thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:4, 5).

The fact that humility is a chief requisite to true spiritual attainment is attested by Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 1:6-9

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I

am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Thus Jeremiah describes the work preparing him for his fifty years of service as a messenger of spiritual Law.

Jeremiah 1:11,12

Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

The rod of the almond tree symbolizes spiritual development — the awakening of certain spiritual centers through lifting the serpentine spirit Fire from the base of the spine to the head. It is the same as Aaron's rod that blossomed and was laid in the Holy of Holies as a symbol of an ideal yet to be attained by the race. The "blossoming rod" which, according to tradition, was possessed by Joseph indicated his worthiness to become the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the above it denotes power within

Jeremiah himself whereby he had transmuted generation into regeneration.

Every individual must build within himself his own holy of holies, an innermost sanctuary where he may commune with the Most High. Such attainment will lead to the emancipation of mankind as it did to that of Jeremiah the prophet. Referring to this development Max Heindel, the modern Christian mystic, made the statement that "the suppression of sexual desire is not celibacy; the mind must concur and we must willingly abstain from impurity. This can only be done by what the mystic calls 'finding the woman within himself.'" Jeremiah expresses the same idea: "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." (Jeremiah 31:22)

This was the secret teaching of early rabbis and it is the very heart of that rare book of mystic light, the Zohar. "All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod." (Jeremiah 48:17)

Jeremiah 1:12,13

Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying,

What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.

The masses of humanity are far from having the deeper understanding of these mysteries of life and being. Jeremiah is describing the material progress of mankind, and his words are still true. Lifting of the mass mind into a comprehension of the mysteries of regeneration is a very slow process; many life cycles will yet be required for its accomplishment.

The path of the spiritual teacher is beset with trials and most subtle temptations. The first prophetic message voiced by the young Jeremiah concerned subjugation of Judah by a foe from the north, a prophecy which failed to materialize. As a consequence the youthful Seer suffered deep humiliation and went into seclusion for a period of fourteen years.

This incident illustrates an important principle for a spiritual life. The true occultist knows he can never be too cautious about making predictions before he has acquired ability to explore the archetypal world. Even then he cannot foretell with absolute certainty because archetypes do not reveal what man may do with his free will to alter the course of manifestation as it appears at any one time in the region of archetypes. Archetypes are great patterns existing in the mental world, created by man himself in strict

accordance with the Law of Causation. Predictions maybe accurate representations of these patterns as they currently exist in the World of Thought, yet they may fail of fulfillment because new causes are set into operation which modify the patterns and thus modify the course of manifestation on the material level.

After his first prophetic failure and his retirement for further instruction, Jeremiah re-emerged into the mundane world to complete his mission. Meanwhile, repairs on the Temple and resumption of the ancient Feasts proceeded under young King Josiah. And as workmen "repair the breaches" of the Lord's House an ancient Book is found!

Esoterically, it may be said that all good kings repair the Temples that all evil kings destroy. Internally and externally, the work of construction or of destruction proceeds apace and without pause, by day and by night. A person's discovery of the kingdom of God within his soul is reflected not only in his physical body, but in his environment and in all his external relationships, whatsoever they may be. Jeremiah and Josiah, prophet and king, together restore to the world the Book of the Law: "And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king." (11 Kings 22:10)

This Book was Deuteronomy. At the king's command, Huldah the prophetess was consulted: "(now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her." She prophesied that God in His mercy would spare Josiah the sight of evils which were to befall Judah following his reign.

II Kings 28:3

And the King stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

The king "stood by a pillar" as the people received the New Covenant, signifying that esoteric truths which had been withdrawn under Manasseh and Amon were being restored. All who were present in Jerusalem were caused to stand to the Covenant. Those whose hearts were enlightened were ready to pass through the Door of Light. This can be done only when the king stands by the fallen pillar that has been lifted again.

Josiah instituted reforms in accordance with the Deuteronomic Code or Book of the Second Law, found by the priests amid the debris of the Temple, and Jeremiah joined him in the work. This was another severe test of the

prophet's spiritual and moral integrity. The test question of the mystic Temple, "Who are my father and my mother?" was put to Jeremiah, for suppression of old sanctuaries would include one in the village of Anathoth, home of his father and his other kin. By his answer he incurred the enmity of relatives, who then plotted to take his life because they considered him a traitor to his people.

The name Jeremiah means Jehovah establishes, and the name befitted the man. Despite bitter persecution, loneliness, misunderstanding and friendlessness during most of his life, Jeremiah moved forward undaunted, his eyes focused on a vision of work to be accomplished for bringing in the new era.

After the passing of Josiah both kings and priests opposed Jeremiah and attempted to thwart his work. He was even forbidden use of the Temple by Jehoiachim's reign. Jeremiah's Words were written down by Temple he predicted the complete ruin of the political state and of organized religion, and did this at a time when false prophecy was punishable by death. He thus excited the bitter animosity of both Church and State and many plotted his murder.

During Jehoiachim's reign Jeremiah's words were written down by his scribe, Baruch, and read in the Temple: "Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the House

of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's House, in the ears of all the people." (Jeremiah 36:10) Later, Jeremiah's predictions of destruction so enraged the people that he was imprisoned in a verminous dungeon so deep it was necessary to lower him by cords. Here he was compelled to remain for a time in perpetual darkness and in a state of half-starvation: "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." (Jeremiah 38:6)

But dark as is the picture that history draws for us, Jeremiah was blessed with a spiritual compensation of which material-minded man knows nothing. Food of the spirit could not be shut away from the saintly prisoner; he found bread that the multitude knows not of. Nor was he in darkness, for he had found "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" — Light which mankind in general has darkened by the shadow of mortal mind.

Josiah's death by the hand of the Egyptians at Megiddo — "And the archers shot at the king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded." (II

Chronicles 35:23) — refers to the subtle test which every neophyte must pass when he goes into battle against the forces of darkness. As does Amfortas in Wagner's Parsifal, Josiah cries, "Have me away, for I am sore wounded."

"And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah." (II Chronicles 35:25) With the death of Josiah most of the people turned again to the old Taurean worship with its sensualism and attendant vices. Jeremiah's life became one of perpetual martyrdom, for false prophets resented his denunciation of them: "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:32) The scribes and teachers also opposed Jeremiah bitterly for his fearless words concerning them: "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them." (Jeremiah 8:8,9)

For his rebuke of them Jeremiah's fellow citizens in the village of Anathoth planned his assassination. Spoke Jehovah through the prophet: "And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of

Anathoth, even the year of their visitation." (Jeremiah 11:23)

Political leaders united with the religious faction in their persecution of the prophet: "Now Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Belijamin, which was by the house of the Lord." (Jeremiah 20:1,2) And King Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's books:

Jeremiah 36:20-26

And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.

So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Blishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments,

neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

Nevertheless, Elvathan, and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them.

But the king commended Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the Lord hid them.

Such hatred and persecution continued after Zedekiah's accession to the throne:

Jeremiah 37:15,16

Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonothan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. . . . Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days.

During the early part of Zedekiah's reign the work of Jeremiah was divided between those exiled in Babylon with the deposed King Jehoiachin, the young son of Jehoiakim, and the very poor people left in Judea. Jeremiah admonished the Babylonian captives to be ready for an extended stay: "For thus saith, the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and

perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jeremiah 29:10)

He counseled the remnant left in Judea to submit to the rulership of Babylon:

Jeremiah 27:9-11

Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:

For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.

For several years the prophet wore about his neck a wooden yoke to remind the people of their servitude to Babylon and of the folly of rebellion.

Zedekiah ignored Jeremiah's warning and rebelled, seeking the friendship and assistance of Egypt. Within a year Chaldea had laid waste the city of Jerusalem by fire and plunder, and had carried all leaders away captive as before. Some survivors fled into Egypt and Jeremiah was

forced to flee with them. Upon reaching Egypt another crushing sorrow awaited this man of tragedy. His own people turned to the old Taurean worship of Ishtar (Venus), the Egyptian Hathor, now a licentious worship given to drunkenness.

Jeremiah 44:7,8,16-18

Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to out off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah. to leave you none to remain;

In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.

But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of

heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

Appropriately, Jeremiah has been called the Savonarola of his time. Certain it is that Savonarola's utterance concerning himself is equally applicable to Jeremiah: "Sorrow has pitched her tent against me."

Jeremiah's influence reached into future generations according to his own prophecy: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10)

When Zedekiah was taken captive to Babylon, Jeremiah became guardian of his two daughters, the royal princesses. He took them with him into Egypt, where he carefully nurtured and instructed them for thirteen years. Then all three mysteriously disappeared.

Early Irish writings relate that about 586 B.C. a divine man arrived in Ireland and that he brought with him many wonderful things. Among them were the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant and the Stone of Jacob, all of which had been taken from the Temple on the eve of Jerusalem's capture by Nebuchadnezzar. The man was accompanied by his king's daughter, Tea Tephi, a name meaning the

beautiful one from the east. Later, this princess married the Irish ruler who, upon his marriage, assumed the name of Heremon of Tara. Jeremiah wielded such influence that he became the patron saint of pre-Christian Ireland. With Heremon's aid, he founded a School of the Prophets of Tara. Many came to receive the esoteric teachings of the new Messianic Dispensation and went forth over Europe as missionaries to prepare others for the coming of the Christ. Ireland was known in this period as "The Circle of the Saints."

In the hills of Tara, so the story goes, Jeremiah buried the Ark. The Nine-Arch Degree of Masonry commemorates its hiding place. "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, the Ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done anymore." (Jeremiah 3:16)

The Book of Maccabees gives an alternative account, declaring the holy relics are buried on Mount Pisgah (Nebo):

II Maccabees 2:4-8

It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw

the heritage of God.

And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.

And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it.

Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy.

Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed unto Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honorably sanctified.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Jeremiah cried out from the depths of his heart: "I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me." But out of the travail of his soul was born a new conception of man and of his own relationship to God. Through sorrow he learned to raise himself until he touched the very heart of God. This was a reward without price, a divine compensation. Out of the depth of his own experiences he proclaimed: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."
(Jeremiah 29:13)

Almost immediately following his disappearance Jeremiah became highly honored; and after the Exiles returned from Babylonian captivity his books were treasured as relics and studied with reverence and devotion.

— ***Corinne Heline***