

Jeremiah, Man of Tears



Jeremiah was born into a religious home in the kingdom of Judah. His Dad, Hilkiah, was a priest. The family lived in a town called Anathoth, not far from Jerusalem. Maybe Jeremiah's parents thought he would also become a priest. But God had other plans.





At the time of Jeremiah's birth, God's people were not living according to God's Word. Nearly everybody, from the king down to the most humble worker, worshiped false gods - even in God's own holy Temple!

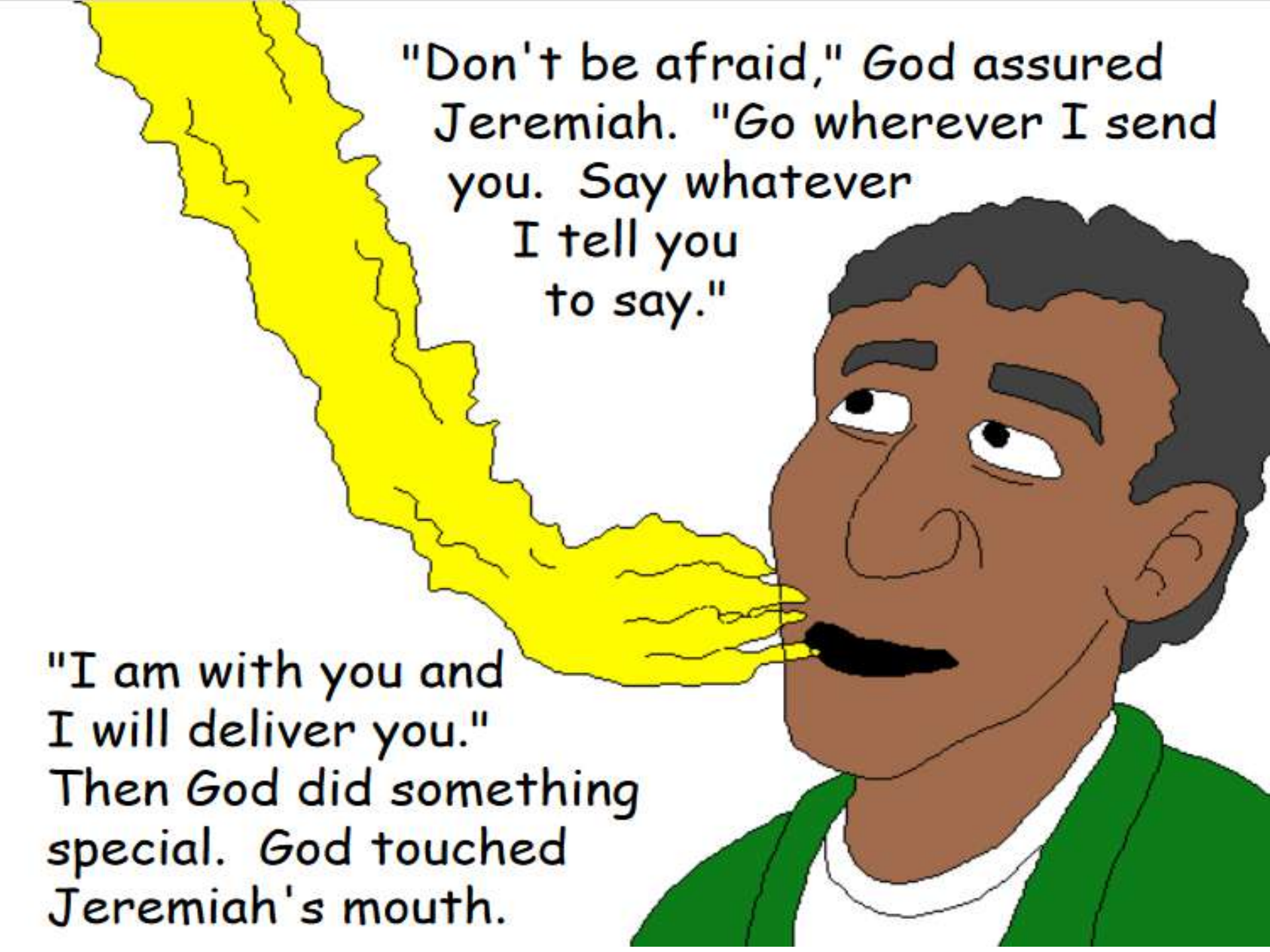
When
Jeremiah
was a young
man, God
spoke to him.
"I knew you
before you were
born," God told Jeremiah,
"and I planned then that you will speak for Me."



God's call seemed to scare Jeremiah. "Ah, Lord GOD!" he cried out. "I cannot speak, for I am a child." He was more than a child - he was twenty years old. But Jeremiah didn't think he could

speaking out for God against the wickedness all around him.





"Don't be afraid," God assured Jeremiah. "Go wherever I send you. Say whatever I tell you to say."

"I am with you and I will deliver you."
Then God did something special. God touched Jeremiah's mouth.

God gave Jeremiah strength and courage and wisdom. He spoke out boldly, reminding people that God loved them and wanted to help them. But nobody listened to him. Not even the king.



Even the priests got angry and told him to quit speaking about God. There were also false prophets who said that Jeremiah was not telling the truth.



Jeremiah reminded the people that, about a hundred years before, the northern kingdom of Israel had abandoned God. Their enemies, the Assyrians, conquered them and moved all of the Israelites to distant lands.





Now the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, had abandoned God. The enemy armies were already on the march. Would God allow His people to be conquered and taken into exile too?

The people trusted their idols. Could idols save them from their enemies? No! Only God could save them. The people got so angry at Jeremiah, they made a plot to kill him. But God protected His servant.



Finally, God said something that must have shocked Jeremiah. God said, "Don't pray for this people. I will not hear them when they cry to me for help."



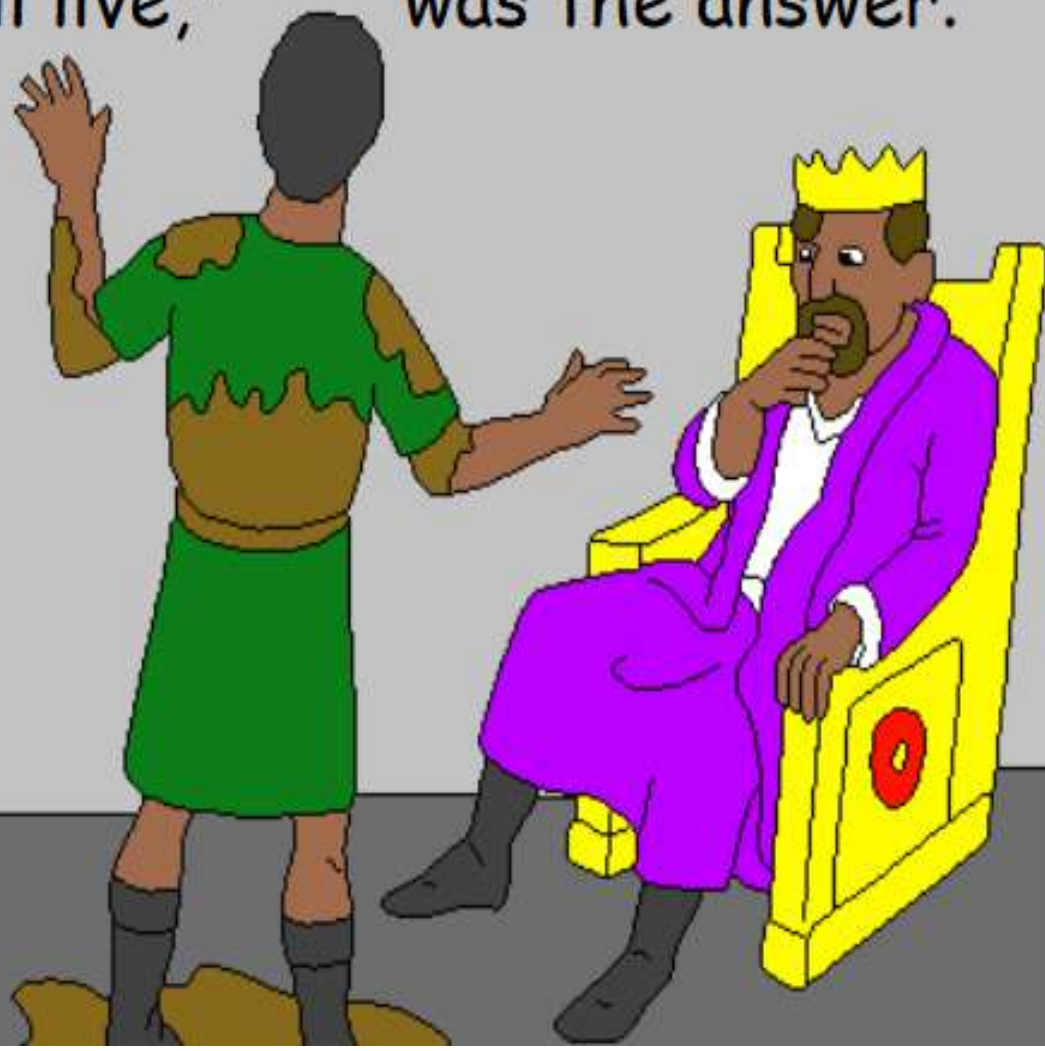
Jeremiah warned the king he would lose the battle with the army of Babylon. The king was angry and threw Jeremiah in prison. Even in prison, Jeremiah kept on preaching and trusting God.



After he got out of prison Jeremiah again preached to the king and the people that they should turn back to God and put their trust in Him. This time, the king had Jeremiah lowered into a deep muddy dungeon.



But God was at work in the king's heart. He secretly rescued Jeremiah and asked him what God wanted the king to do. "Go into captivity, and God says you will live," was the answer.



The Babylonian army conquered Jerusalem and all of Judah. They pulled down the walls and all the buildings, and burned everything. God said His people would go into captivity for seventy years, and then He would bring

them back to the Promised Land.

