

## Tough-Fibered and Realistic

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Let us continue to look at Jeremiah and what he said to an age so much like our own. Jeremiah, you know, is called the “weeping prophet,” for we find him crying over his people. And his attitude must be ours: we must weep over the church as it has turned away and weep over the culture that has followed it.

Jeremiah himself was born in Anathoth, as we are told in Jeremiah 1:1, and he died probably in his early sixties in Egypt. He did not have an easy life. In fact in Hebrews 11:36-37, we read this: “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder.” As you investigate, you can locate certain people in the Bible who went through all but one of the persecutions outlined in Hebrews 11. You don't find anybody who was sawn asunder.

Tradition, however, tells us that after the Jewish nation was taken over by the Babylonians, some of the Jews carried Jeremiah down into Egypt, precisely where he did not want to go and where he told them not to go. The tradition (which may or may not be true) goes further and says that they put him in a hollow log and sawed through it. This might be what the writer of Hebrews is referring to. In any case, Jeremiah's life, which we will look at in more detail, was not an easy one.

His message was not an easy one either. We learn what that basic message was in Jeremiah 1:10: “See, I have this day set the over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” Notice the order. First, there was to be a strong negative message—and then a positive one. But the negative message was primary. It was to be a message of judgment to the church which had turned away and to the culture which flowed from it. Judah had revolted against God and His revealed truth; and God says that Jeremiah's message was to be basically a message of judgment. I believe the same message is to be ours today.

Christianity is not romantic, not soft. it is tough-fibered and realistic. And the Bible gives us the realistic message that Jeremiah preached into his own days, a message I am convinced the church today must preach if it is to be any help in the post-Christian world.

(Death in the City by Francis A. Schaeffer, Chicago, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969, 35-36, Paragraph Structure Modified)