

Jeremiah 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

God initiates Jeremiah's prophetic training with a question: 'Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou?' This pedagogical method—asking what the prophet sees—engages Jeremiah's observation and interpretation, training him to perceive spiritual significance in ordinary objects. His response 'I see a rod of an almond tree' (maqqel shaqed, תְּלַשֵּׁׁעַ נְּקָדָה) describes a common sight—an almond branch. The almond tree (shaqed, from shaqad, תְּלַשֵּׁׁעַ, 'to watch' or 'be wakeful') was significant in Israel as the first tree to blossom in late winter (January-February), its white flowers appearing before leaves. In Hebrew, shaqed (almond) is a wordplay on shaqad (watching/waking). This linguistic connection isn't coincidental but divinely designed for prophetic instruction. The almond branch symbolizes vigilance, awakening, early activity—appropriate imagery for God's watchfulness over His word's fulfillment. This teaching method appears throughout Scripture: God uses visible creation to illustrate invisible truth, training prophets and believers to see beyond physical appearances to spiritual realities.

Historical Context

Almond trees held symbolic significance in Israel. Aaron's rod that budded was almond (Numbers 17:8), demonstrating divine authentication. The menorah design included almond blossoms (Exodus 25:33-34), symbolizing light and life. Jeremiah's vision of the almond branch occurs early in his ministry (following his

commission), establishing a pattern—God would use common objects to communicate prophetic messages. Similar vision-teaching appears with Amos (plumb line, summer fruit, Amos 7:7-8, 8:1-2) and Zechariah (multiple symbolic visions, Zechariah 1-6). This method demonstrates God's condescension—using familiar, tangible images to communicate spiritual truth. The almond's early blooming made it called 'the waker' or 'the watcher' tree, perfectly suited to symbolize God's watchfulness. Ancient Near Eastern cultures used natural phenomena symbolically; biblical prophets were trained to see God's messages in creation, dreams, and ordinary objects.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's method of teaching Jeremiah through observing ordinary objects suggest about finding spiritual meaning in daily life and creation?
2. How can we develop eyes to see spiritual significance in circumstances and experiences beyond merely physical observation?

Interlinear Text

וְיֹאמֶר	דְּבָרָם	יְהוָה	אֵלָי	יָאֹמֶר	רְאֵה	מִתְבָּאֵן
H1961	Moreover the word	of the LORD	H413	came unto me saying		H4100
	H1697		H3068		H559	
וְיֹאמֶר	דְּבָרָם	יְהוָה	רְאֵה	יָאֹמֶר	מִתְבָּאֵן	שְׁקָדֵם
H859	I see	Jeremiah	came unto me saying	a rod	of an almond tree	H8247
	H7200	H3414	H559	H4731		
רְאֵה	אֵלָי					
H589	I see					
	H7200					

Additional Cross-References

Amos 7:8 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

Zechariah 5:2 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Amos 8:2 (References Lord): And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.

Jeremiah 24:3 (References Lord): Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

Zechariah 4:2 (Parallel theme): And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

Numbers 17:8 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

Ezekiel 7:10 (Parallel theme): Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.