

Dr. Gary Yates, Jeremiah, Session 17, Jeremiah 11-20, Prophetic Sign Acts Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Yates, Jeremiah, Session 17, Jeremiah 11-20, Prophetic Sign Acts, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture analyzes Jeremiah chapters 11-20, focusing on Jeremiah's prophetic sign-acts. These **nonverbal actions**, such as burying a loincloth and smashing a clay pot, powerfully conveyed God's message of **broken covenant** and impending judgment on Judah. The lecture explores the **theological significance** of these acts, highlighting God's sovereignty while emphasizing Judah's opportunity for repentance and the consequences of their refusal. Comparisons are drawn with similar actions by other prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel, illustrating how these sign-acts heightened the impact of their messages. Ultimately, the lecture demonstrates how Jeremiah's actions served as stark warnings and visual representations of Judah's spiritual condition.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Jeremiah).



**Yates_Jeremiah_Ses
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3. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 17, Jeremiah 11-20, Prophetic Sign Acts

Jeremiah 11-20: Prophetic Sign-Acts Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Yates, what is the primary theme introduced in Jeremiah 11 that is traced throughout chapters 11-20?
2. What is a prophetic sign act, and what is its purpose? How is it different from simply preaching a message?
3. Describe the sign act of the buried loincloth. What does the loincloth symbolize?
4. What is the significance of the linen material of the loincloth, and the idea of the garment being worn close to the body?
5. What is the sign act involving the jar of wine, and how does the wine function symbolically in this act?
6. Besides the loincloth and the jar of wine, what are three other sign acts performed by Jeremiah, and what is the basic message of each?
7. What are the sign acts mentioned that are performed by other prophets in the Bible, such as Isaiah and Ezekiel?
8. Describe Jeremiah's first visit to the potter and the message conveyed by this sign act.
9. What is the significance of the second visit to the potter and the act of smashing the earthenware jar?
10. What overall message about God's character and his relationship with the people of Judah do these sign acts communicate?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary theme is the broken covenant between God and Judah, which leads to God's impending judgment. This unraveling of the covenant is portrayed through Jeremiah's laments and sign-acts.
2. A prophetic sign act is a nonverbal communication where the prophet dramatically acts out a message. Its purpose is to make the message more vivid

and memorable to the people; it ensures that the people do not just hear the message, but also see it.

3. Jeremiah is instructed to wear a linen loincloth, bury it, and later retrieve it after it has become ruined. The ruined loincloth symbolizes the ruined condition of Judah in God's eyes due to their disobedience and broken covenant with him.
4. The linen material could represent the priestly status of Israel, and wearing it close to the body represents the close, intimate relationship God desired with his people; this contrasts sharply with the garment's ruined state after being buried.
5. Jeremiah presents a jar, stating that every jar should be filled with wine, and after the obvious response from the people, he clarifies that the wine symbolizes the intoxicating and overwhelming nature of God's judgment upon them.
6. Jeremiah wears an animal yoke on his neck to symbolize Judah's impending subjugation to Babylon. He buys family property to symbolize the hope of return from exile, and he buries stones in Egypt to show that Nebuchadnezzar will also invade and judge Egypt.
7. Isaiah is commanded to go naked and barefoot for three years to warn against alliances with Egypt. Ezekiel builds a model of Jerusalem and enacts its siege, lays on his side for extended periods, and shaves his hair to symbolize the horrors and realities of exile.
8. Jeremiah observes a potter working with clay, and this act demonstrates God's sovereignty and his power over his people. It shows that while God is sovereign, he will reshape and reform the nation if they turn from their sins, offering a chance for repentance.
9. Jeremiah purchases an earthenware flask and smashes it, symbolizing that Judah has lost their opportunity for repentance, is now hardened, and God will judge them in the same way, leaving them broken.
10. The sign acts communicate that God is both sovereign and merciful, giving his people opportunities to repent. However, when they persist in their sin, God will send judgment. They also show that God is not apathetic but acts decisively in the face of sin, and that they break the covenant by their actions.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the various sign acts performed by Jeremiah, focusing on how each act visually communicates the message of the broken covenant and impending judgment.
2. Compare and contrast the use of sign acts by Jeremiah with those performed by other prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel. How do these actions reflect the challenges of delivering God's message to hard-hearted people?
3. Discuss the theological implications of Jeremiah's two visits to the potter, and how these acts reveal both God's sovereignty and humanity's responsibility in their relationship with him.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of prophetic sign acts as a means of communication, considering the cultural context of the time, and how these actions challenge the people to engage with the divine message.
5. Explore the theme of repentance in Jeremiah's ministry, specifically focusing on how the sign acts function as both warnings of judgment and invitations to return to God.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement or binding relationship, particularly between God and his people. In the context of Jeremiah, the covenant between God and Judah is the central relationship at stake.
- **Prophetic Sign Act:** A symbolic action performed by a prophet to communicate a message from God in a vivid and non-verbal way. The act is meant to emphasize and clarify a verbal prophecy.
- **Lament:** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow, often found in prophetic literature as a response to suffering or injustice. In Jeremiah, his laments reflect the suffering of Judah.
- **Parah:** A location a few miles from Jeremiah's hometown of Anathoth. It is a likely substitute for the Euphrates in the loincloth sign act, which is far more distant.
- **Davaq:** A Hebrew verb meaning to cling or cleave to something or someone. In the context of the loincloth, it describes the close relationship God intended to have with Israel, similar to a marriage.
- **Yotzer:** A Hebrew word meaning potter or former, which highlights God's role as the creator and shaper of his people. The potter's wheel is used as a metaphor for God's power over and shaping of his people.
- **Valley of Hinnom:** A valley outside of Jerusalem, historically associated with idolatry and child sacrifice. In Jeremiah, it's the location of the second potter visit, symbolizing the depth of Judah's depravity.
- **Earthenware Flask/Potter's Jar:** A fixed, hardened pot used in Jeremiah's second visit to the potter, representing the hardened state of Judah and the impending judgment from God.
- **Sariah:** A scribe (and likely the brother of Baruch) who performed the sign act of throwing the scroll into the Euphrates, symbolizing the destruction of Babylon.
- **Remnant:** The small group left behind after a destruction event, symbolizing the survivors of God's judgement. In the context of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the remnant was always a topic of hopeful restoration.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture on Jeremiah 11-20, focusing on Prophetic Sign-Acts:

Briefing Document: Jeremiah 11-20 - Prophetic Sign-Acts

Introduction

This lecture focuses on Jeremiah chapters 11-20, exploring the theme of covenant brokenness and the use of prophetic sign-acts to communicate God's message of impending judgment to Judah. Dr. Yates emphasizes that these chapters depict not just the prophet's personal struggles but also the unraveling relationship between God and Israel. The lecture highlights how Jeremiah's actions become a powerful, non-verbal form of communication, designed to make God's message impossible to ignore.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Covenant Brokenness:

- The primary theme of Jeremiah 11-20 is the broken covenant between God and Judah, leading to inevitable judgment.
- **Quote:** "The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus says the Lord, behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them." (Jeremiah 11:10)
- The laments of Jeremiah reflect this unraveling and his struggle to intercede for a people whom God has deemed unrepentant.
- Prose sermons in Jeremiah often summarize or introduce key themes, such as the broken covenant and the ensuing judgment.

1. Prophetic Sign-Acts:

- Prophets use sign-acts as a powerful form of nonverbal communication to make their message more vivid and impactful. It isn't magic, but rather a way to ensure the people not only hear the message but also see and feel it.
- These acts aim to break through the complacency and indifference of the people, preventing them from simply ignoring the message.
- Jeremiah's sign-acts are often focused on judgment, but can also convey hope.

- **Quote:** "...the prophets... by preaching the message and then acting it out, they are making sure that the people can't just pass it off. They can't just yawn and say, we've heard all of this before. The prophet, in a sense, is going to get in their face; he's going to act the message out, and it's going to make that message more powerful."

1. **The Sign Act of the Buried Loincloth (Jeremiah 13:1-11):**

- Jeremiah is commanded to buy a linen loincloth, wear it, and then bury it in a rocky place (likely Parah, a town near his home, rather than the Euphrates).
- He retrieves it after an extended period, finding it ruined. This symbolizes the ruined state of Judah.
- The linen signifies their priestly status and close relationship with God.
- The loincloth being worn close to the body represents the intimate relationship God had with Israel (like the marital union described in Genesis 2:24).
- **Quote:** "For as the loincloth clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me, declares the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen." (Jeremiah 13:11)
- Ultimately, the ruined loincloth symbolizes Judah's broken state, and their inability to fulfill their purpose of reflecting God's glory to other nations.

1. **The Sign Act of the Wine Jar (Jeremiah 13:12-14):**

- Jeremiah presents a wine jar, initially a symbol of refreshment and festivity.
- He proclaims that "every jar shall be filled with wine," which seems obvious to the people.
- The meaning shifts: the wine symbolizes God's judgment, filling the people with the "drunkenness" of his wrath.
- The smashing of the jars represents the destruction that will come upon the people who are like broken vessels due to their sin and God's judgment.
- **Quote:** "Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land: the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Jeremiah 13:13)

1. **Other Sign Acts in Jeremiah:**

- **The Yoke (Jeremiah 27):** Jeremiah wears an animal yoke to symbolize Judah's coming subjugation to Babylon.
- **Buying Back Property (Jeremiah 32):** Jeremiah buys back family property as a symbol of hope for the return from exile.
- **Burying Stones (Jeremiah 43):** Jeremiah buries stones at the entrance of Pharaoh's house in Egypt, representing Nebuchadnezzar's coming conquest of Egypt.
- **Scroll and Stone (Jeremiah 51):** Sariah ties a stone to a scroll containing messages of judgment against Babylon and throws it into the Euphrates, signifying Babylon's complete destruction.

1. **Examples of Sign-Acts in Other Prophets:**

- **Isaiah (Isaiah 20):** Walks naked and barefoot for three years to symbolize the humiliation of Egypt and discourage alliances.
- **Ezekiel (Ezekiel 4-5):** Builds a model of Jerusalem and siege ramps, lies on his side for 430 days, shaves his hair and divides it to represent the exiles, makes bread with mixed grains, and eats limited food to depict the conditions of exile.

1. **Jeremiah's Two Visits to the Potter (Jeremiah 18-19):**

- **First Visit (Chapter 18):** God directs Jeremiah to observe a potter at work. When a vessel is spoiled, the potter reshapes it.
- This represents God's sovereignty and ability to mold Israel.
- It demonstrates that God is willing to reshape Israel if they return to him, an opportunity for repentance and restoration.
- God is sovereign and will do as he pleases, but His actions are always also in response to the choices of the people.

- **Quote:** "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation concerning which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it." (Jeremiah 18:6-8)
- This passage presents a conditional view of God's judgment; God is willing to relent if the people repent. The offer of repentance is available to them, like the wet clay in the potter's hands.
- The role of a prophet is likened to the Ghost of Christmas Future from "A Christmas Carol," warning of potential doom to prompt change.
- **Second Visit (Chapter 19):** Jeremiah buys a hardened clay flask, a vessel that is beyond reshaping.
- At the valley of Hinnom, a site of idol worship and child sacrifice, Jeremiah smashes the flask, symbolizing the irreversible judgment that is coming.
- The broken flask represents Judah's lost opportunity for repentance, their final rejection of God's offer.
- Judah's rejection of God's offer for repentance seals their fate, unlike the malleable clay from chapter 18.
- The smashing of the jar was similar to a practice used by Egyptian priests to symbolize judgment on their enemies.
- **Quote:** "Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, and shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended.'" (Jeremiah 19:10-11)

Conclusion

Dr. Yates emphasizes that Jeremiah's prophetic sign-acts are not mere theatrics but powerful tools for communicating God's message to a hard-hearted people. These actions highlight the gravity of Judah's covenantal violations and the consequences of their rejection of God. The visits to the potter underscore the importance of repentance, while also showing the finality of judgment for those who refuse to turn from their sin. God gave Judah every opportunity to repent, but when they continually refused, judgment was inevitable. The lecture highlights the importance of heeding God's message, not just hearing it, but responding to it.

5. FAQs on Yates, Jeremiah, Session 17, Jeremiah 11-20, Prophetic Sign Acts, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Jeremiah's Prophetic Sign Acts

1. **What are prophetic sign acts, and why did Jeremiah use them?** Prophetic sign acts are nonverbal communications where a prophet dramatically acts out a message, not as a magical means to make it happen, but as a powerful visual aid. Jeremiah employed them because his audience often ignored or dismissed his verbal prophecies, so he needed to make the message more vivid and unforgettable to them. The acts served to emphasize the urgency and importance of the message by engaging the audience's senses beyond mere listening.
2. **What is the significance of the loincloth burial in Jeremiah 13?** Jeremiah's burial of a linen loincloth and its subsequent retrieval in a ruined state symbolized the spoiled relationship between God and Judah. The loincloth, made of fine linen, may have represented the priestly status and intimate relationship God intended for the nation, akin to a garment worn close to the body. Its ruined condition demonstrated Judah's spiritual and moral decay, emphasizing that they had become unattractive and useless in God's eyes, failing to fulfill their purpose to reflect His glory.
3. **What was the meaning of the wine jar sign act, and was it a sign act?** The wine jar sign act, possibly enacted or simply referred to as a proverb in Jeremiah 13, involved stating that "every jar shall be filled with wine." While it seemed obvious, it served as a setup. The wine didn't represent refreshment but instead symbolized the overwhelming judgment of God that would intoxicate and destroy the people like smashed jars. The wine jar, meant to hold wine, and thus have a purpose, being smashed further symbolized Judah's failure to fulfill its purpose, and represented the destruction of the nation and its leaders.
4. **How did Jeremiah's yoke symbolize the impending Babylonian captivity in Jeremiah 27?** In Jeremiah 27, Jeremiah wore an animal yoke on his neck and shoulders while preaching about the coming Babylonian captivity. This dramatic action symbolized Judah's political subjugation to Babylon. It was a powerful visual reminder, reinforcing the message that they would be forced into bondage.

5. **Why did Jeremiah buy back family property in Jeremiah 32 when the Babylonian exile was imminent?** Jeremiah's purchase of family property before the Babylonian exile was a positive sign act. Although seemingly illogical during a time of imminent exile, it symbolized hope for the future. It demonstrated God's promise that the people would eventually return to the land and reclaim their heritage, providing a tangible reminder that their exile would not be permanent.
6. **What did Jeremiah's act of burying stones at the entrance to Pharaoh's house in Jeremiah 43 signify?** In Jeremiah 43, Jeremiah buried stones at the entrance of Pharaoh's house in Egypt. This act symbolized that Nebuchadnezzar would establish his authority over Egypt. It served as a stark warning to the Jewish refugees who had fled to Egypt in an attempt to avoid the Babylonians, showing that they couldn't escape God's judgment.
7. **How do Jeremiah's two visits to the potter in Jeremiah 18 and 19 differ in their symbolism?** In Jeremiah 18, Jeremiah's first visit to the potter illustrated God's sovereignty, as the potter represents God shaping humanity and Israel. The wet clay being re-shaped emphasized God's offer to Israel: that if they repented, He would reshape them and withhold judgment. However, in Jeremiah 19, the second visit, the potter's fixed, fired jar represented Judah's hardening in sin. Jeremiah breaking the jar symbolized that Judah had forfeited the opportunity to repent and were now facing inevitable judgment and destruction.
8. **What is the overall message about God's judgment and human response conveyed through Jeremiah's sign acts?** Jeremiah's sign acts emphasized that God is sovereign but also reacts to human choices. Although God pronounces judgment, He also provides opportunities for repentance. The sign acts were designed to be a strong warning so that the people could respond positively by changing their ways and being spared. Ultimately, they conveyed the message that God is merciful and offers salvation, but judgment will come when people persistently refuse to repent and return to Him. It highlights a pattern in the prophets that judgment is not inevitable when God offers it, and the outcome depends on human response to God.