

Week of July 4-10

Jeremiah 7 Jeremiah's Temple Sermon

This chapter denounces the sins of idol worship. At the gate of the Temple, the prophet rebuked the people for putting their trust in external things, like the temple, and told them that their true safety was in amending their ways. He charged them with committing all kinds of sin, and yet standing before God in His house, imagining that by this act, they would be delivered and set free to continue in their sin. He suggested they take note from the history of Shiloh, and from what God had done with Israel.

So terrible was the condition that the prophet was told not to pray for the people. Their sin was heinous and persistent. Therefore, all their sacrifices and offerings were refused. They had defiled the Temple and built Topheth as a place of worship. This Topheth was to become "the valley of Slaughter," and all laughter was to end.

Jeremiah 8 Trust in False Wisdom

Utter desolation would overtake them so that death would be chosen rather than life. The people's terrible persistence had aggravated this sin of idolatry. If men fall, it is naturally expected that they will get up, if they wander that they will return. In the case of Jerusalem, this had not been, so their backsliding had been perpetual. There was no sign of repentance. The people did not know the judgment of the Lord.

Because of this perpetual backsliding, the judgment was again pronounced, and the prophet declared the reason to be their complete corruption, the false healing of their wound by prophet and priest, and their lack of shame. Therefore, the judgment was to be complete.

The strain of the terrible message on the prophet now became evident as he poured out his soul in crying. His perplexity was great, and he was conscious of the offended King, and the unhealing physician, and in His anguish cried out, "Why have they provoked me to anger? (verse 19)"

Jeremiah 9 Exile for The Unrepentant

In answer to his own question, Jeremiah sighed for some adequate means of expressing the anguish of his heart, and then for an escape to some lonely place in the wilderness. All this was like a complaint against God, for he revealed most carefully how conscious he was of the sin of his people, describing it in terrible detail.

To this cry of His servant, God replied in a fivefold declaration. First, that He had no choice but to afflict because of their sin; He next affirmed His own sorrow, but by a question, reminded the prophet that there was a reason for the perishing of the land and the destruction of the city.

Then He plainly stated what the reason was. Their persistent rebellion had made necessary His wrath. He then called the people to lament, but insisted that it should be for right causes. Finally, He proclaimed the true means of glorifying God by man, not in his wisdom or riches, but his understanding and knowledge of God.

Jeremiah 10 Gods and Idols

The sin of idolatry is dealt with. The prophet revealed the madness of idolatry in a powerful contrast between idols and God. He described the vanity of idols. They were the work of the hands of man. They were unable to move but had to be carried.

In contrast, he declared the majesty of God. Continuing the contrast, he described the weakness of idols and the might of the true and living God. The test as between idols and God he declared to be the test

of creation. Gods that had not made the heavens and the earth must perish from the earth and from under the heavens. God had made the earth and stretched out the heavens. He, therefore, was the God of power.

Once again, the prophet suggested a contrast, but it is now between the man and idolatry, and the man and God. On the sin of idolatry, he then pronounced judgment. He next uttered the wail of the people and ended by a cry of distress to God in the presence of the destruction of the cities of Judah.

Thoughts on Jeremiah 7-10

What in the world was so appealing about those idols? We refuse to accommodate false belief systems. Few things can incur God's divine wrath as severely as false worship. Jeremiah's words had about as much impact on his people as a mosquito on a horse.

The temple was at Jerusalem with them. They felt safe and secure like some people who wear crucifixes, crosses, lay out their Bibles on the coffee table. Shiloh, where the tabernacle was located was destroyed and Jerusalem was about to fall. There comes a time when a person, professing to be God's own, but plainly living in complete abandon of God, can be abandoned by God, left to the inevitable consequences of His judgment.

Jeremiah 11 Judah Has Broken The Covenant

By this time, Jeremiah had preached for five years.

He proceeded to deal with the broken Covenant. God sent a special word commissioning him to pronounce a curse on "the man that heareth not the words of this covenant." To this command, Jeremiah answered, "Amen, O Lord."

He was then commanded to proclaim in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the failure of the fathers, how God had warned, they had disobeyed, and God, therefore, had visited them with punishment. This sin of the fathers was being repeated by their sons. They were guilty of a conspiracy in turning back to other gods. Therefore, judgment was against them, and God abandoned them. The thought of the broken Covenant is carried out in the summary with which the section closes, the marriage relationship. The beloved no longer has a place in the house because she has "wrought lewdness." Therefore, God visits with punishment.

We see how God strengthened Jeremiah given the persecution which was already stirred against him, and of the still severer troubles awaiting him.

Jeremiah 12 Jeremiah's Complaint

Now we hear the prophet appeal to God to be his Defender, and finally, we hear the divine determination concerning his evil neighbors.

Their plans were revealed to him by God. It was a plot against his life. He appealed to the Lord, and was told by the declaration of His knowledge of the plot, and of the fact that the severest punishments would be brought to these men.

The prophet then poured out his soul in questions to God. Why is it, he asked, that the wicked prosper? "How long shall the land mourn?" God's answer indicated that the things he had seen, and the trials through which he had passed were as nothing to those which awaited him. Those to come were by comparison as horses to footmen, as the swelling of Jordan to a land of peace. Concerning His people, God declared that He had forsaken them. With this statement of the case, the prophet agreed. He saw the judgment and recognized its righteousness. God then declared that the evil neighbors of the

prophet would be plucked up with Judah, but that there would yet be a way of deliverance for them, for He would visit them in compassion.

Jeremiah 13 The Parables of The Waistcloth and of The Jars

The account ends with the story of how God gave him two signs, one for himself and one for the people. His was the sign of the girdle which he was to wear, then to hide by the Euphrates, and then to seek to see its worthlessness. The significance of the sign was clearly stated to him. The girdle was the emblem of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

The second sign was a spoken one in the form of a proverb, "Every bottle shall be filled with wine." This he was to declare to the people. Their obvious response would be, 'Do we not know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?'" In answer, he was commanded to declare that God would fill the rulers with drunkenness, and dash them one against another.

The account closes with the cry of the prophet to the people to hear, the last charge of God, which is a call to the king and queen mother, Jehoahaz and Hamutal; and an announcement of the coming judgment and its cause, the declaration of the hopelessness of the case, and a final pronouncement of doom.

Note

We now come to the second division of the Book containing the account of the prophet's ministry. This falls into three sections: prophecies before the fall of Jerusalem (14-39), prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem (40-45), and prophecies concerning the nations (46-51).

Jeremiah 14 Drought, Famine, and Sword

The first series of messages declare God's determination to punish. This consists of a parable, an account of a controversy between the prophet and God, and the new charge delivered to the prophet. The opening parable is a graphic picture of drought. The high and the low alike are affected. The whole ground is barren, and all animal life is suffering.

After the word concerning the drought, we have the account of a remarkable controversy between Jeremiah and God. In language full of dignity, the prophet appealed to God not to persecute His people. This appeal was answered by solemn refusal. Because of the persistent wandering of the people the prophet was commanded not to pray for them, God is declaring that He would not hear them. The prophet then pleaded that the prophets had declared that they should be preserved from evil. To this God replied that they had lied. Though speaking in His name, they had not been sent by Him, and therefore sword and famine would consume them. Likewise, the people to whom they had prophesied must be punished.

Again, Jeremiah appealed, inquiring if God had utterly forsaken His people, making confession of sin, and beseeching God's pity on the people for His own name's sake.

Jeremiah 15 Judgment Cannot Be Avoided

To this great appeal, God again replied by declaring that mercy was impossible, and judgment inevitable, and this on account of the sin of Manasseh, namely, the rejection of God by the people. Therefore, they had been judged, and judgment must be completed.

On hearing this, the prophet cried out in great anguish, and God promised to strengthen him while reiterating His determination to punish the people.

Once again, the prophet replied, first in resignation, and then in prayer on behalf of himself, which ended with a sigh, indicative of the strain being put on his faith. The controversy ends with God's promise that if Jeremiah were true to the Word of God, God would be to him a defense and a deliverance.

Jeremiah 16 The Day of Disaster

The controversy was immediately followed by a new charge to the prophet. God called him to a life of personal asceticism, commanding that he abstain from both mourning and mirth. He was to stand aloof from the people to deliver the messages of God. His messages of judgment would provoke inquiry among the people concerning the reason of God's dealings with them. The prophet was charged to make clear to them that these things resulted from their sin. Yet immediately, God declared to His servant that His purpose in judgment was the ultimate deliverance of the people.