

Book of Jeremiah

Lesson 9: Jeremiah's Message in Symbols and the Results

Reading: Jeremiah 18:1-20:18

Review

Jeremiah is called by God to be a "prophet to the nations" and to speak primarily to the kingdom of Judah for the purpose of

- Warning the people of God's impending judgment via the kingdom of Babylon
- Calling the people to repentance and spiritual restoration,
- Delivering God's promise of a return to the land after 70 years of captivity, and
- Reminding the remnant left in Canaan to remain faithful to God

Throughout the first 17 chapters of Jeremiah, God has detailed through His prophet Judah's spiritual unfaithfulness and wicked condition which is to result in judgment via the invading army of Babylon. Despite God's invitation for Judah to return to Him, the people fail to recognize their spiritual condition and instead turn to priests who fail to teach and false prophets who prophesy "peace" in Judah's final days. Judah's state of denial is due in part to their false sense of security in the presence of the temple, the keeping of sacrifices, and its knowledge of the Law. Such religious practices by the people did not include obedient hearts sensitive to God's word and ultimately failed to recognize God's righteousness which could not abide the idolatrous practices of "such a nation as this".

Judah's propensity for idolatry was so ingrained that it was part of their obstinate nature to "follow the dictates of their evil heart." The idolatrous practices they participated in were so heinous as to not even be named among the Gentiles. Their pursuit of idols included the utter rejection of God as the One True God, as they sought to silence the voice of Jeremiah. So bad was their condition that even if Moses and Samuel could have pleaded on behalf of the people, it would not have made a difference – the lot of Judah had been cast, and their fate was sealed. The only lesson they were capable of learning was the one they would receive through God's judgment via the Babylonians. God gives Jeremiah symbols to demonstrate the judgment that is to come on this rebellious people.

1. What two scenarios are given in 18:7-10 to describe God's sovereignty among the nations, and what do these scenarios teach us about the sovereignty of God (Exodus 4:21-23)?

2. What is the message behind the potter and the clay and what is Judah's response (18:11-12)?

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3. What plot did the people make against Jeremiah, and what was their reasoning in doing so (18:18)?
4. How does the description in 19:4-6 show the extent of Judah's idolatry and how far they had wandered from God?
5. What is the interpretation of the broken flask (19:10-13)?
6. What was the significance of Pashur's new name, and what was God's message to him (20:3-6)?
7. Despite the enormous opposition that Jeremiah faced, what kept him faithful to his calling as God's messenger (20:7-9; 1:17)?
8. How does Jeremiah describe his life in 20:14-18?