

Message #19

Jeremiah 15:1-21

We may recall that Jeremiah had been praying that God would step in and reverse the bad things that He was causing to hit His own people.

Jeremiah told God that only He could deliver them and he was praying that God would do that. **In Chapter 15, God answers Jeremiah and the news is not good.**

GOD ORDERS JEREMIAH TO TELL HIS PEOPLE THAT BECAUSE OF THEIR SIN, THEY ARE DESTINED FOR HORRIBLE JUDGMENT AND THERE IS NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO TO STOP IT AND JEREMIAH LEARNS THAT HE IS NOT TO QUESTION GOD OR COMPLAIN TO GOD OR CHALLENGE GOD, BUT TO CONTINUE TO STAY FAITHFUL TO GOD AND SPEAK FOR GOD.

Now this chapter may be analyzed systematically by breaking it down into six main themes:

THEME #1 – God would not answer any prayer for help no matter who made it. **15:1**

Verse 1 says the LORD said to Jeremiah. I don't know of any minister who would actually say this to God's people, so it would have to be revelatory from God. Can you imagine some minister going to a prayer meeting and stand up and telling the people what is in **verse 1**?

God's message to His own people was this: it would not matter if it were Moses or Samuel standing before Me asking for My grace and forgiveness; My heart is not with these people, I would not answer their prayers and I want these people gone from My presence and I am letting them go. In other words, God's decision to punish His people cannot be reversed.

Moses and Samuel were powerful men of God, who acted as amazing mediators and intercessors. When God was angry with Israel in the wilderness for worshipping a golden calf, it was Moses who intervened and interceded and delivered the nation (i.e. Ex. 32:11-14).

When Israel lost the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines, it was Samuel who interceded and turned the nation back to the Lord so they experienced God's blessings once again (I Sam. 4-7).

So when we look at the Biblical record of Moses and Samuel, they were men of God who interceded in the midst of the anger and judgment of God and God answered them and He preserved the nation.

God was so angry with His people at this point that He wanted them to know that even if both Moses and Samuel were standing before Him and praying and begging God to deliver and preserve His people, He would not answer them or their prayers.

God says you can bring the best intercessors ever to your defense and I will not listen.

God wanted Jeremiah to tell His own people this very message. You have crossed a major line and I am sick of you all and I am letting you go. **Their sin had actually reached such a horrible level that it had crossed a line that was even beyond the boundary of prayer. Their pursuit of drunkenness (13:13) and sexual immorality (13:27) and idolatry and their phony religious worship services not interested in truth had pushed God to the limit.** He was angry and He was done.

Now naturally people would say well if we cannot turn to God, where are we to go and what are we to do?

THEME #2 – God has specifically determined the chastising punishment of His people. **15:2-9**

In **verse 2**, He told Jeremiah to say to them when My people ask where are we supposed to go, you tell them “to death, to the sword, to famine and to captivity.” In other words, **God says I am sending all of you straight into judgment.**

What God is saying is that in My sovereignty, I am going to allow My people to experience some serious judgments because they would not deal with their sin:

- 1) I am ordaining that some of my own people are going to die.
- 2) I am ordaining that some of My own people will die by the sword.
- 3) I am ordaining that some of My own people will die of famine.
- 4) I am ordaining that some of My own people will be taken captive.

In **verse 3**, God says to Jeremiah, follow up this news with the fact that I am appointing them to four kinds of humiliations to come and completely destroy and annihilate My people.

- 1) A sword that will chop them. This is a judgment that cuts off body parts of people.
- 2) Dogs that will drag them off. This is a judgment that eats the dead people.
- 3) Birds that will eat them. This is a judgment that picks over dead bodies.
- 4) Beasts that will kill them and eat them. This is a judgment that both kills and eats.

This is scary because God is saying I will use both human enemies and animal predators to destroy and get rid of My people.

Then, if that is not enough, in **verse 4**, God says follow that up with a message that I am going to make them an object horror lesson to the entire world. God has scattered the Jews all over the world and they still are not a great nation of God. They still are an object lesson to the world.

Tell them I am doing this because of the godless leadership of Manasseh, who was the son of Hezekiah, who was king of Judah. I am going to do this because of what he did to Jerusalem. It was Manasseh’s sin that was the “root cause” of this judgment.

The story of Hezekiah is an interesting one. When it came time for Hezekiah to die, we may recall that Hezekiah asked God for more time on earth and God granted him 15 more years (II Kings 20:6).

During the first three years of those 15 additional years, Manasseh was born (II Kings 21:1). If Hezekiah would have submitted to the original plan of God, Manasseh would not have been in existence. But he was born and he became the most evil, idolatrous king to ever reign in Jerusalem (II Kings 21:3-16).

Manasseh was an evil son and king. He promoted Baal worship and he promoted worshipping stars in heaven. He built idolatrous altars for people to worship false gods. He practiced witchcraft and sorcery and divination. He consulted with spiritists and mediums and witches. He did so much evil that God was angered by him and, as a result, there was nothing anyone could do to stop His wrath judgments.

The people just blindly followed these corrupt, godless leaders as they led God's people away from what was right and true.

What we do see from verse 4 is that one godless, corrupt leader can lead a nation right out of the abundant blessings of God and into the unstoppable judgment of God.

In **verse 5**, God says no one will have pity on them. No one will mourn over what I am doing to you and no one will even ask how you are doing. God specifically mentions the city of Jerusalem. This is supposed to be a sacred city where people love and reverence God.

But the people of the city did anything but love and reverence God. Look at **verse 6**.

- 1) God's people have forsaken God.
- 2) God's people keep going backwards, not forwards. Instead of progressing, they kept regressing.

Each believer should ask himself/herself this—Am I progressing or regressing in my relationship with the Lord. These people were regressing.

So God says I am sick of forgiving you and changing My mind so I have determined to stretch out My hand and destroy you. Notice the end of **verse 6**, God says, "I am tired of relenting." God puts up with a lot of junk from His people for a long time. God has patiently waited and prolonged chastising judgment.

According to **verse 7**, God says I will winnow people like a farmer with a fork. God will remove them from their cities and gates of their cities and will decimate their population, including their children. **God would destroy His own people because they would not repent.**

God says in **verses 8-9** that He will make their widows more numerous than the sand of the seas. So many of my people will die that no one will be able to number the widows. There is a reference here to the final years of the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble.

But it does communicate an important chastising principle and that is God can actually bring enemies into the land to destroy His own people. The children would be slaughtered and she would be shamed and humiliated.

THEME #3 – Jeremiah complains about the ministry he has been given. **15:10-11**

By the time Jeremiah got to this part of what God was saying, he became very depressed and stressed. Who wouldn't be? It is very depressing to minister and not see any success. Jeremiah was so depressed that he pronounced a "woe" judgment on himself.

Jeremiah said before God in **verse 10**, "woe to me and woe to my mother who borne me." Jeremiah felt totally alone and depressed. Jeremiah said I did not do one thing against anyone. Yet he found himself in "contention" with the whole world and all in the land.

Jeremiah said I never did anything bad to anyone. No one lent me money and I never lent anyone else money and yet "everyone curses me." Jeremiah was a hated man, not for what he had done, but for what he was telling the people of God.

In **verse 11**, God encourages Jeremiah that He would keep him free and use him. There would come a time when those who had hated him and abused him will come seeking his help during the time of judgment. Jeremiah would find himself experiencing the disasters but God would continue to watch over him and use him in the midst of the judgments.

When faithful people of God see God sovereignly permit horrible things to happen, they need to continue to trust God, speak on behalf of God and stay faithful to God.

THEME #4 – God reaffirms the chastising judgment He will bring on His own people. **15:12-14**

In **verses 12-14**, God gives a graphic picture of what He would do:

- 1) He would bring an unstoppable power from the north that they could not defeat or smash.
- 2) God would allow enemies to take everything from His own people because of their sins.
- 3) God would allow enemies to take His people out of their land to another foreign land.

God was going to bring the Babylonians in to conquer His people and plunder them and take them captive.

THEME #5 – Jeremiah appeals to God to remember him and help him. **15:15-18**

Again in verses 15-18, Jeremiah presents his own case to God and he presents twelve points to his argument:

- 1) You know me. **15a**
- 2) You know my persecutors so take vengeance on them. **15b**
- 3) Do not take me away with the other people. **15c**
- 4) You know I have endured reproach for your sake. **15d**
- 5) You know I took in the word of God. **16a**
- 6) You know I found joy and delight in my heart in the word of God. **16b–He loved God's word.**
- 7) You know I have been called by your name. **16c**

- 8) You know I did not fellowship with the godless merry-makers. **17a - key to godliness - do not fellowship with those who do not love, know and apply the word of God.**
- 9) You know that I did not exult in the fact that your hand was on me. **17b**
- 10) You know I sat alone because I was filled by you with indignation over what the people were doing. **17c**
- 11) Why do you let me suffer in these judgments. **18a**
- 12) It is deceptive to hit me with negatives when I did not do what they did to deserve it. **18b**

THEME #6 – God answers Jeremiah and encourages a faithful Jeremiah. **15:19-21**

Now remember God is not answering the prayers of His people, but He does answer the prayer of Jeremiah. In **verses 19-21**—God answers Jeremiah.

Jeremiah had made some very serious allegations against God and God called him to account because of it.

- 1) If Jeremiah would return to the LORD, God would restore him and let him stand in a relationship with Him. **15:19a**
Jeremiah would have his own moments when he would need to return to the Lord and apparently his lack of trust and doubt and worry about what others thought was one of those moments.
- 2) If Jeremiah extracts the precious from the worthless, then he will be God's spokesman. **15:19b—God's people who will be used by God purify themselves.**
- 3) Jeremiah must permit the people to turn to him. **15:19c**
Jeremiah must stand for God and His word and let others turn to him.
- 4) Jeremiah must not permit himself to turn to the people. **15:19d**
Jeremiah must not permit himself to turn to the ways of the people.
- 5) God would make Jeremiah a fortified wall that He would protect. **15:20a**
- 6) They may fight against Jeremiah but they will not prevail. **15:20b**
- 7) God will save Jeremiah. **15:20c**
- 8) God will deliver Jeremiah. **15:20d**
- 9) God will deliver Jeremiah from the wicked. **15:21a**
- 10) God will redeem from the violent. **15:21b**

Do not ever turn away from God or His word. Do not ever think lightly of God and His word. God expects His people to know what is precious and worthless.

Jeremiah never complained or blamed God again.

Carefully observe the words God uses in this discussion with Jeremiah in **verses 20-21**. I am the God who saves; I am the God who delivers and I am the God who redeems. As people of God, this is what we need to know. When we see everything fall apart, we need to stay faithful to God and His word and we need to return to the Lord, knowing He saves, He delivers and He redeems.