

Journey through Jeremiah Part 7 – Judah’s Refusal to Walk in the Old Paths

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, February 01, 2017

† Jeremiah 6:1-30

(1) O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

Remember, we saw in Jeremiah 1:1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: Jeremiah was from the Tribe of Benjamin. Here in verse 1, he directly addresses them and warns them to flee from Jerusalem and blow the trumpet in Tekoa. Tekoa is a city in Jerusalem. It is about 6 miles south of Bethlehem. It would be on the route of the invading Chaldean army from the North.

(2) I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.

The LORD states that Judah has been like a comely and delicate woman. In other words, a beautiful woman that has been protected and taken care of at home. Never having to fear the enemy or want for anything. That is how the LORD has protected them all of these years. But now she will no longer be protected.

(3) The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.

Here the Chaldean army is compared to the shepherds that normally kept flocks in the fields around Jerusalem. These Chaldean “shepherds,” will pitch their tents around Judah, surrounding her and feeding off of her. It is a picture of God allowing the enemy to take advantage and plunder the once delicate, protected woman of Zion.

(4) Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

(5) Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

The words of the Chaldeans as they prepare for war against Judah. The day has passed by so they plan the attack for the night when it will be least suspected. They target the palaces of Judah. The word palace means “an elevated place.” This is probably just a general term used for the houses and buildings in which they would destroy.

(6) For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.

Here we clearly see that the LORD Himself is the One that gives the city over to the Chaldeans. He tells them to hew down the trees so they can make way for their destructive army to invade and take the land. He has given it over to them.

(7) As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds.

This is another description of the sins of Judah. Their wickedness spews forth like a fountain of water. They are wholly given over to sin and it continually in grief.

(8) Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

It is amazing how many chances God offers the people of Judah. Here again is yet another plea for them to turn and repent. “Be thou instructed,” meaning listen to the instructions given to you and do them. The instructions were to shun their false idols, turn from their sin and wickedness, repent, and worship God Jehovah alone. If they would do that He would forgive them and heal their land. 2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But they refuse to repent, therefore He will depart from them and leave them desolate.

(9) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets.

This demonstrates the completeness that the LORD wants the enemy to clean out Judah. Just as a grape gatherer would go back a second time and check and glean all of the grapes from the vine, the Chaldeans are instructed to go back and forth and get every last one of them.

(10) To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

No one in Judah has their ear toward the LORD. None are listening. There is no one to speak to and to warn because they refuse to listen. Sounds much like our world today. People are willing to listen to lies but no one wants to hear the truth. In fact, he says that the Word of the LORD is a reproach to them and they have no delight in it. That is a picture of a people fully given over to sin. If God’s Word is a reproach to you then you’ve got problems. It sure is a reproach to the majority of the world today.

(11) Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days.

The LORD is going to release his fury upon these people because of their sin. No one will be spared, husbands, wives, young, old, everyone is included.

(12) And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.

The LORD is going to take everything that hold dear away from them; their fields, their homes, even the men’s wives. It is going to be horrific judgement.

(13) For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

It is a sad state of affairs in Judah. Everyone from the least to the greatest are full of covetousness. He even lists the prophet and priest and says that they dealth

falsely. They are full of lies and hypocrisy. They are not workers for the LORD God Jehovah, they are deceitful workers only out for themselves.

I wonder what the LORD thinks when he looks at today's so-called "prophets and priests?" What about these charlatans on television begging for donations while flying around in 7 million dollar private jets and living in 40 million dollar homes?

(14) They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

He describes the message of the false prophets claiming there is peace, peace in the land of Judah but He says there is NO peace. My friend, there is no peace apart from God. It is impossible to have peace without Him. Claiming to have peace when you do not have God is nothing but a sham and you are only fooling yourself to believe otherwise.

(15) Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Here we have one of the most profound statements against Judah as you will find in the Bible. He says "they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." That word blush means what you think it means. Here is the definition according to Webster's: To redden in the cheeks or face; to be suddenly suffused with a red color in the cheeks or face, from a sense of guilt, shame, confusion, modesty, diffidence or surprise; They were so in love with their sins and abominations that they were no longer ashamed of them. They relished in them. They no longer had the ability to blush over their sins because they had no shame.

(16) Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Here is a direct command from the LORD telling them to walk in the ways, ask for the "old paths" that were good and walk in those ways. If they do that then they will find rest for their souls. But their reply was: "We will not walk therein."

(17) Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

The people of Judah are adamant they are not going to obey the LORD. They flat out refuse to walk in the truth and they refuse to hearken to the sound of the warning trumpet. Because of this refusal they have signed their own death warrants.

(18) Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.

(19) Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

The LORD is going to deliver punishment and deal with them hard. The "fruit of their thoughts," is referring to the things that their thoughts had produced. Since they constantly thought of sin and rebellion, that is the fruit that their thoughts have produced.

(20) To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

These things that are listed were common things in their religious worship service; burning of incense and offering up burnt offerings. They would take frankincense that was imported from Arabia and mix it with the sweet cane to create an incense that they used in their worship routine. The LORD tells them that these things are not acceptable to him. He knows they are just going through formalities, there is no true worship of Him. It's like going to Church every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and Wednesday night because you have a routine or because you feel obligated but as far as worship is concerned you really could care less, you are just going through the motions of worship, sing, pray, fellowship, listen to preaching, but there is no truth in worship. That's why we find Jesus stating the following in:

John 4:23-24: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

(21) Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

Because of their willful rejection of God and their religious hypocrisy, He is going to lay stumblingblocks before them. This could mean both spiritual or physical stumblingblocks. We know that the LORD will give you over to your sinful desires if you push him too far. We find an example of this in the New Testament in the Book of **Rom 1:21-32**

(21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

(22) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

(23) And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

(24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

(25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

(26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

(27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

(28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

(29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

(30) Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

(31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: (32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

That is the same thing that is happening in Judah and it's the same thing that is happening to scores of people in the United States of America.

(22) Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. (23) They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they *are* cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

Another description of the great power and destruction of the Chaldean army that would invade from the North. They are men of war, their sole purpose is to invade, destroy, and conquer.

(24) We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

The people of Judah have heard of the fame of their enemies from those who have experienced their destruction first hand. The stories of devastation and brutality have reached Jerusalem and the people are scared to death. They are so scared their hands have become feeble and unable to even brandish a weapon.

(25) Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy *and* fear *is* on every side. (26) O daughter of my people, gird *thee* with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

Jeremiah warns the inhabitants of Judah not to venture out into the fields or into the open because the enemy will be waiting for them and they will experience their destruction first hand. Instead they should all put on the sackcloth and ashes and mourn for the terrible loss they are about to experience. Mourn like you would if you lost your only son.

(27) I have set thee *for* a tower *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

God has appointed Jeremiah to be the tower and fortress among God's people. He is to try them to see if there be any righteous. It's a separation process like separating precious metals from the dross, only the good will remain.

(28) They *are* all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: *they are* brass and iron; they *are* all corrupters. (29) The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. (30) Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

But, there is none good to be found. When they are tried by the fire none of them come out silver or gold, they are rejected.