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Tillamook, Oregon

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Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah

The King is Coming

April 18, 2021

Sermon Text: Jeremiah 25

Scripture Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1

I wanted to make two important points as we begin this morning by way of encouragement – no, make that 3 points. Here they are:

First, there is a lot of pressure on us in our day to put our trust in man instead of in the Lord. It is a false hope:

Psa 33:16-20 The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. (17) The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. (18) Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

(19) that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. (20) Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

So we have lots of people, including professing Christians, pointing us to earthly “deliverers.” Furthermore, many of these people are like the Jews that Paul rebuked. Listen to it:

Rom 2:1-3 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. (2) We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. (3) Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

Understand? A person may be very patriotic – and that is good. They may denounce the moral corruption that we see all around us – sexual perversions, financial dishonesty, corruption, abortions – and it is good to denounce

such evils. It is foolish and actually a cause of many wars in history for our nation not to have a strong, well-equipped and well-trained military.

But many of these same people are in fact practicing the same evils, only wrapped up perhaps in a different package. You cannot promote and praise God, mother, country, and apple pie, mouth the words “God bless America,” and then behind the scenes break God’s law yourself and think that because of your particular persuasions, you have God’s favor upon you. Only Christ can save. Only Christ is our hope.

So let’s not be caught up in this kind of thing and be deceived.

Second, it is VITAL that the Bible be your ultimate anchor. Which is to say, that God’s word be your anchor. If you are being lazy and not studying scripture yourself carefully, if you are just doing what someone else has told you Christianity is, then you are going to be deceived. So many people that I talk to spent years in bondage to false teachings and it was only when the Lord started opening their eyes to His Word that they realized they actually needed to rethink their entire religion!

The God they served turned out to be a false caricature. And I don’t mean that you should read the Bible yourself just so that you can see that I am right!! I mean, you need to have the Lord by His Spirit enable you to know and understand His Word and if it turns out that I was right in some sermon I preached, then that is great. If I am wrong, then you need to know it. Or any other preacher or teacher.

Third, We know that we are in the last days. I mean we have been in the last days, the last era of history before Christ comes, for 2000 years now! We are two millennia closer to Christ’s return than Paul was. Therefore, listen to this:

Heb 10:23-27 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, **and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

(26) For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer

remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

It is all the more important for us to stand together, to gather together regularly, to remember the Lord's Day, *as the time of Christ's return draws closer*. Why? Well, to obey the Lord for one thing, but also, as vss 26-27 state, it is a safeguard against the increasing wickedness in this world that calls on us constantly to return to the world.

Can a real Christian ever fall away from Christ? Can a born again person ever become "unborn." No. BUT, we are not to be careless and presumptuous. There are many people who have assumed they were saved and then found out in later life that they had not been born again at all. We have heard the truth. We are responsible for obeying it and trusting by faith in Christ. And those who persevere to the end in faith can be assured that they will meet Christ as their Savior and Lord and not as a fury of fire.

Alright then, let's continue with our study of the book of Jeremiah and see the picture we have there of Christ the King coming to judge the nations.

Jer 25:1-14 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), (2) which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem:

(3) "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened.

(4) You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, (5) saying, 'Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. (6) Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.'

(7) Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.

(8) “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, (9) behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

(10) Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. (11) This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

(12) Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. (13) I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. (14) For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will

recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”

This is the scripture that Daniel was reading when the Lord showed him what was going to come about:

Dan 9:1-4 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— (2) in the first year of his reign, **I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.** (3) Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. (4) I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Twenty-three years! Jeremiah had preached God’s word to these people of Judah, and they rejected that word all that time. They knew all of the history we have been studying in the Sunday school class – all the events of the days

of Elijah and Elisha. They knew the northern kingdom had fallen and that it was God's judgment for *the very same sins Jeremiah had been rebuking them for.*

And besides the preaching of Jeremiah, God had sent other prophets to them. Before Jeremiah's preaching there were Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk and Zephaniah was a contemporary of Jeremiah. There are statements in scripture that indicate further that there were many other preachers whose sermons to the people were never published. All the sermons had one note: *their evil sins which they must repent and turn from, specifically idolatry, warning of impending destruction if they refused, and promise of blessing if they obeyed.*

But still, they would not listen. (By the way, this shows us that it is a great error to conclude that we have failed unless we see masses of people repenting and being saved. If that were the criteria for success in the Lord's work, Jeremiah was a terrible failure).

Matthew Henry:

Jeremiah, for his part, had been a constant preacher among them twenty-three years; he began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, who reigned thirty-one years, so that he prophesied about eighteen or nineteen years in his reign, then in the reign of Jehoahaz, and now four years of Jehoiakim's reign. Note, God keeps an account, whether we do or no, how long we have enjoyed the means of grace; and the longer we have enjoyed them the heavier will our account be if we have not improved them.

So judgment in the form of the Babylonian invasion, under King Nebuchadnezzar, was imminent. Survivors would be carried off into captivity. The rest slaughtered. Jerusalem, the temple – all of it – destroyed.

Matthew Henry again:

When men will not regard the judgments of God's mouth they may expect to feel the judgments of His hands, to hear the rod, since they would not hear the word; for the sinner must either be parted from his sin or perish in it.

Now, the Lord calls Nebuchadnezzar His “servant.” Think about that. This pagan king – the Lord’s servant. That tells us that everyone, even kings – good or evil – are used by the Lord for His purposes. Still another wonderful quote from Matthew Henry-

The messengers of God's wrath will be sent against those that would not receive the messengers of his mercy. One way or other God will be heeded, and will make men know that *he is the Lord*.

Nebuchadnezzar would be humbled by God as you recall – for his arrogance. He would spend 7 years literally out to pasture at the end of which he is restored and praises God –

Dan 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar was followed by King Belshazzar. Here is how Babylon was brought to an end by the Medes and Persian kingdom –

Dan 5:18-21 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. (19) And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.

(20) But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. (21) He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

And now Daniel drives it home:

Dan 5:22-30 And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, (23) but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of

his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

(24) “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. (25) And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. (26) This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; (27) TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; (28) PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (29) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. (30) That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.

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Now, Jeremiah continues here in chapter 25 to pronounce the Lord’s judgment to come upon not only Judah, but all the nations:

Jer 25:15-38 Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of **the wine of wrath**, and **make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.** (16) They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.” (17) So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand, and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it:

(18) Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day; (19) Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his officials, all his people, (20) and all the mixed tribes among them; all the kings of the land of Uz and all the kings of the land of the Philistines (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); (21) Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; (22) all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastland across the sea; (23) Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who cut the corners of their hair; (24) all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed tribes who dwell in the desert; (25) all

the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; (26) all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another, and all the kingdoms of the world that are on the face of the earth. And after them the king of Babylon shall drink.

(27) “Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword that I am sending among you.’ (28) “And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: You must drink!

(29) For behold, I begin to work disaster at the city that is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning **a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth**, declares the LORD of hosts.’ (30) “You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: “‘The LORD will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, **like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.**

(31) The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against the nations; **he is entering into judgment with all flesh**, and the wicked he will put to the sword, declares the LORD.’ (32) “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, disaster is going forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth! (33) “**And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground.**

(34) “Wail, you shepherds, and cry out, and roll in ashes, you lords of the flock, for the days of your slaughter and dispersion have come, and you shall fall like a choice vessel. (35) No refuge will remain for the shepherds, nor escape for the lords of the flock. (36) A voice—the cry of the shepherds, and the wail of the lords of the flock! For the LORD is laying waste their pasture, (37) and the peaceful folds are devastated because of the fierce anger of the LORD. (38) Like a lion he has left his lair, for their land has become a waste because of the sword of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.”

Now, as you read that, you cannot help but see this is more than an announcement of a historical judgment that has already happened. The Lord did bring down Babylon and He used Babylon to judge all those surrounding nations of Israel who for so long hated the Lord and oppressed His people. But we see here language that is of a worldwide nature. A judgment of all the people of the earth.

Furthermore, there is language here that the New Testament uses in speaking of the final return of Christ to judge the world. Specifically, this,

(30b) The LORD will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, **like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.**

Now compare that with this:

Rev 14:18-20 And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the

earth, for its grapes are ripe." (19) So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. (20) And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

The Bible often uses this picture of "drinking the cup of wrath" as a way of speaking about God's wrath against the wicked in the day of judgment. (Think also of the cup that Jesus asked, if it be possible, be removed from Him). The wrath of God, you see. Like drunken men they will reel and totter, out of their minds you might say with fear when His wrath comes.

Upon this whole matter we may observe, 1. That there is a God that judges in the earth, to whom all the nations of the earth are accountable, and by whose judgment they must abide. 2. That God can easily bring to ruin the greatest nations, the most numerous and powerful, and such as have been most secure. (Matthew Henry)

The Old Testament then once more gives us pictures and signs and types of events that were historical and real, but which serve to warn the world of God's promised Day of judgment to come in which He will pour His wrath out upon the wicked, *and particularly upon those who have oppressed and persecuted His people*. Like Judah, most human beings mock any notion of this judgment. Or they fancy that they will be quite alright just as they are when Christ comes.

They will not.

Rev 22:6-21 And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." (7) "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

(8) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, (9) but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." (10) And he said

to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. (11) Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

(12) "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. (13) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (14) Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

(15) Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (16) "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

(17) The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds

to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (20) He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.