

Journey through Jeremiah Part 28 Jeremiah's Brush With Death

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, June 28, 2017

† Jeremiah 26:1-24

Five months ago, we studied in Jeremiah Chapter 7 and we covered most of this chapter because it is the detail of what happened to Jeremiah after he preached against the sins of the people of Judah.

1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying, 2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:

This event happened during the beginning of King Jehoiakim's reign. He was the son of the good King Josiah. But Jehoiakim is not a good King, and he will set about to undo all of the work that his father had done to rid the Kingdom of idolatry. He despises Jeremiah and so do the people that Jeremiah is preaching to.

The LORD told Jeremiah to stand in the court of the LORD'S house and speak. This is inside the Temple where the most people would hear the message. It was their Holy Sacred place and even though they were worshiping false idols they were still putting on the show of going to the Temple and doing their religious routines.

Notice that the LORD warns Jeremiah not to "diminish" a word of the prophesy. In other words don't try and soften it up so that it is more pleasing to hear, let them have it exactly the way I tell you.

3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

There is the reason Jeremiah was not to soften the message. It was so the people would get the full impact and graveness of the message. The LORD is sending a strong warning that He is going to do things to them because of the evil doings.

4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, 5 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; 6 Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Here is the warning Jeremiah is to preach to them. If they do not walk in His law and hearken His Words then He will curse them and make their Temple like He did Shiloh. Of course, the Jews knew exactly what that meant. They were familiar with what happened at Shiloh. Back in Joshua's day the Tabernacle had been set up in Shiloh. That was the place that God had directed them to worship Him. It was a sacred place and the place where they kept the ark of the covenant. Shiloh means "**a place of rest**," it was where God met with the Jews until they angered Him and forsook Him so he allowed the Philistines to take the Ark of the Covenant and he forsook Shiloh and moved His Tabernacle to Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Psalms 78:58-61: For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

(59) When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: (60) So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men; (61) And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

Psalms 78:67-69: Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: (68) But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. (69) And he built his sanctuary like high *palaces*, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. 9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

Here is another case of "shooting the messenger." All Jeremiah was doing was telling them what God said. It wasn't Jeremiah's message, it was God's. Because the people were convicted of the message and they absolutely had no plans of repenting, they decided if they just kill Jeremiah then all of their troubles would be over. They ignored the warning signs.

It's like driving down a road and hearing on the radio that the road you are driving on has a bridge that is out. They warn not to drive on that road or you will plunge into the waters and drown. But instead of listening to the warning and doing something about it like changing your direction or course, you decide to just turn that station off and listen to something else that isn't warning you. We all know the rest of the story. The car drives off of the bridge that is out, goes into the water and they drown.

So, instead of listening to the preacher and repenting, they want to shut him up by killing him. They question him as to why he would say such awful things to them???

10 When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house. 11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

Then when word got out all of the priests, prophets, and princes showed up to also pronounce sentence upon Jeremiah. These were, of course, false priests and prophets, otherwise they would have heard the same message from the LORD that Jeremiah had heard and they would be in agreement with him. But we know they were not and just like we studied last week, God said that he did not speak to these priests and prophets, the word they were declaring was not from Him, it was lies that they had made up.

Nevertheless, they declare that Jeremiah is "**worthy to die**." What were Jeremiah's crimes? Well, of course we know he was innocent, however, to make a case against him to sentence him to death they would need a lawful reason. No doubt they would charge him with blasphemy and being a false prophet. These were the same type of accusations they brought against the LORD Jesus, Stephen, and the Apostle Paul. Speaking out against the Temple of God was considered blasphemous. And according to the Law of Moses: **Deuteronomy 18:20:** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

Don't you find it ironic that false prophets are bringing charges of being a false prophet against Jeremiah. But, that's the way that evil men work.

12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. 13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Jeremiah finally get the opportunity to speak. He simply tells them that the LORD was the One that sent him to prophesy and that they needed to heed the message or face the consequences. He says if they will amend their ways and obey the LORD that He will reverse his plans to bring evil upon them.

14 As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. 15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Then Jeremiah in a very bold move tells them that they can do to him whatever they want to do, however, if they do sentence him to death that they will be guilty of bringing innocent blood upon themselves, in other words, guilty of premeditated, first degree murder.

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

Suddenly a change of mind occurs among the princes and the people. The princes were the town leaders, the governors and such. They did not hold a personal vendetta against Jeremiah like the priests and prophets did. They saw that he had done nothing worthy of death and spoke up in his defense. It was much as in the days that Jesus was accused. All of his trouble came from the religious folks. It wasn't from the common people, it was the priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and such.

17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, 18 Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. 19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Now some of the aged, wise men stand up in Jeremiah's defense. They knew the history of their people and how the Prophet Micah had also prophesied against the people and warned them of coming destruction of the Land and of the Temple. That prophecy can be found in **Micah 3:12: Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.**

These elders make the case that when Micah prophesied the same thing the people did not try to kill him and the people repented and God changed His mind from destroying them at that time. They state this may be a similar case with Jeremiah and they should not be so hasty to put him to death unless they want to bring "great evil against their souls."

20 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah: 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; 22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt. 23 And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

Then Jeremiah adds this little bit of commentary. This was not more words of the elders but Jeremiah adding this to show how dangerous it was in his day. He tells of another prophet that was prophesying in the same time as he was and he also spoke out against Jerusalem but King Jehoiakim had him put to death.

24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

Fortunately for Jeremiah, the LORD sent a good man there to protect Jeremiah. This man was named, "Ahikam." He was the son of Shaphan the Scribe. You remember him don't you? He was the scribe in 2 Kings 22, that read King Josiah the words of the book that was found in the rubble of the Temple when Hilikiah the Priest found it. This Ahikam was Shaphan's son. This family was good to Jeremiah and protected him several times.

Believe it or not we are now at the halfway point in our studies of Jeremiah. There are 52 chapters in this Book and now we only have 26 more to go so we are on the downhill slide.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible