

PREACHING TO A NATION UNDER DIVINE JUDGMENT

TEXT: JEREMIAH 1

Introduction:

1. Jeremiah was the son of a priest in Anathoth, just north of Jerusalem (1:1).
2. He was chosen to be a prophet before he was born (1:5), and he was called to the prophetic office while he was very young (1:6).
3. He was commissioned by the LORD to be a prophet (1:9, 10).
4. He began his ministry during the reign of King Josiah (1:2).
5. After King Josiah was killed on the battlefield, we read in II Chronicles 35:25, "And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah..."
6. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry because of the terrible times in which he lived (16:1–4).
7. Jeremiah was rejected by his people (11:18–21; 12:6; 18:18); he was misunderstood; he was hated, beaten, put in stocks (20:1–3), imprisoned, and charged with being a traitor (37:11–16).
8. Jeremiah is often referred to as "the Weeping Prophet" (9:1).
9. Jeremiah was tempted to quit preaching, but God wouldn't let him (20:9).
10. Jeremiah preached to a nation under the imminent judgment of God. America is facing the imminent judgment of God, but we have few men like Jeremiah today!
11. Today in America most preachers are hirelings. They are like the men described by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 56:10, "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."
12. Jeremiah saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. He was permitted to remain in the land by the captain of the Babylonian forces. When the remnant wanted to flee to Egypt, Jeremiah prophesied against it (42:15–43:3); but he was forced to go with them to Egypt (43:6–7); and that is where he died.
13. W.G. Moorehead said this about the prophet Jeremiah, "It was Jeremiah's lot to prophesy at a time when all things in Judah were rushing down to the final and mournful catastrophe; when political excitement was at its height; when the worst passions swayed the various parties, and the most fatal counsels prevailed. It was his to stand in the way over which his nation was rushing headlong to destruction; to make a heroic effort to arrest it, and to turn it back; and to fail, and be compelled to step to one side and see his own

- people, whom he loved with the tenderness of a woman, plunge over the precipice into the wide, weltering ruin.”
14. Sounds very much like America in 2011 -- "rushing down to the final and mournful catastrophe; when political excitement was at its height; when the worst passions swayed the various parties, and the most fatal counsels prevailed...his nation was rushing headlong to destruction...plunge over the precipice into the wide, weltering ruin.”
 15. Tomorrow is Independence Day. Our country celebrates our independence from England. But we need to repent and acknowledge our dependence upon God!
 16. Our Lord said in John 15:5, "For without me ye can do nothing."
 17. My message this morning is entitled, "Preaching to a Nation Under Divine Judgment."

I. THEY HAD FORSAKEN GOD (1:16; 2:13, 19).

1. Israel had forsaken God. Judah has forsaken God. And so has America. Today God is totally left out of the picture. If the Bible is ever mentioned, it is misquoted or attacked.
2. Recently, NBC decided to cut the words "under God" from the reading of the Pledge of Allegiance that accompanied the beginning of its coverage of the U.S. Open Golf Championship.
3. The liberals who dominate the news media hate God. They hate the Bible. The news media has been brainwashing the American people.
4. The Bible has been thrown out of the public schools. It will get worse now that our corrupt politicians have passed a so-called "gay marriage" law. Little children will be brainwashed into accepting homosexuality. This indoctrination has been going on for quite some time, but it will get far worse now that they have passed this new law.
5. When there is a big crisis or tragedy, such as a school shooting, they seldom pray and they do not bring in pastors. Instead they bring in psychiatrists. But these psychiatrists are not allowed to pray or read Scripture.
6. In Jeremiah 1:13, the LORD showed Jeremiah "a seething pot."
7. This seething pot represented a confederation of hostile nations ready to attack the city of Jerusalem. Today America is facing a similar "seething pot" -- Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, North Korea, China, Russia, and many other adversaries are in this seething pot, and it will soon boil over!

8. Israel had forsaken God, and they were taken into captivity by Assyria.
9. Judah had forsaken God and they were taken into captivity by Babylon.
10. America has forsaken God. How much time do we have left? Only God knows. When Judah had forsaken God, the LORD mentions two specific sins (Jer. 2:13).
11. Matthew Henry said the two great evils were, "ingratitude and folly; they have acted contrary both to their duty and to their interest."
12. Jeremiah 2:13 contrasts the fountain of living waters with broken cisterns, that can hold no water. They had forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters (cf. Jer. 17:13).
13. Psalm 36:9 says, "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."
14. But sinners reject the fountain of life.
15. The picture in Jeremiah 2:13 is of a beautiful mountain stream with clear, cool, clean water. The people have been drinking from that water, but then they forsake it in order to hew out cisterns to catch the dirty water as it runs off down the mountainside.
16. A "cistern" was a dug pit for receiving water conducted from rainfall. Cisterns were important in Israel because of the long dry season -- from May through September.
17. The rain would pour off from the roofs of the houses into the cistern. But oftentimes the water would be dirty and mixed with leaves and insects.
18. *Fausset's Bible Dictionary* says, "Cisterns yield only a limited supply of water, not an ever-flowing spring; representing creature comforts soon exhausted, and therefore never worth forsaking the never failing, ever fresh supplies of God. The stonework of tanks often becomes broken, and the water leaks into the earth; and, at best, the water is not fresh long."
19. Matthew Henry said, "They took a great deal of pains to *hew themselves out cisterns*, to dig pits or pools in the earth or rock which they would carry water to, or which should receive the rain; but they proved *broken cisterns*, false at the bottom, so that they could *hold no water*. When they came to quench their thirst there they found nothing but mud and mire, and the filthy sediments of a standing lake. Such idols were to their worshippers, and such a change did those experience who turned from God to them."

20. Sinners seem to prefer their broken, leaky cisterns with all of the dirt and leaves and bugs and dead mice. The ever-flowing spring of fresh water is available, but they refuse it.
21. Sinners are constantly building cisterns which leak and let the water run out. And they are left with nothing to drink, while they turn their backs on the refreshing stream of living water which is available for all.
22. What are some of these broken cisterns? Human philosophy, money and the things money can buy, materialism, worldly pleasures -- these are broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

II. THEY HAD LOST THE FEAR OF GOD (2:19; 5:22-25).

1. Psalm 36:1 says, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes."
2. One of the characteristics of the wicked man is "there is no fear of God before his eyes."
3. One of the characteristics of the godly man is that he fears God. Proverbs 16:6 says, "By the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."
4. The repentant thief learned the fear of God. After he repented he said to the other thief, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" (Luke 23:40).
5. Joseph had the fear of God. He said in Genesis 42:18, "I fear God."
6. In Job 1:8, the LORD said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"
7. Psalm 66:16 says, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."
8. Revelation 14:7 says, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."
9. But in Jeremiah's day they had forsaken the LORD their God, and they no longer feared Him (Jer. 2:19).
10. Second Kings 17:35 and 36 says, "Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice."
11. But the people were backslidden (Jer. 2:19). And today America is a backslidden nation. Most Americans would rather watch trash on

- television like "Jersey Shore" or "Mafia Housewives" than read the Bible and pray.
12. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 13. But Most Americans do not fear God. And they do not seem concerned that they are heading straight to hell.
 14. Over ten thousand Beliefnet readers responded to their online survey about hell. The first question was: "Do you believe in life after death?" 79% answered Yes. 5% said No. 8% answered they believed in Reincarnation 7% answered "Other."
 15. The second question was only for the 92% who did not answer "no" on the first question. Do you believe in hell? Yes 76%, No 13%, Not sure 8%.
 16. The next question was, "What do you think are the chances you might go to hell?" (Asked of those who did not reply "no" to #1a).
 17. Certain 0.7%, Likely 3%, Unlikely 36%, Not a chance 36%, I don't know 24%.
 18. Percentage of each religious group that answered "not a chance":
Christian (Born-Again) 55%, Christian (Other) 21%, Christian (Catholic) 21%, Jewish 20%, Spiritual but not religious 26%.
 19. Think about it. Twenty-one percent of those who answered that they are not likely to go to hell claim to be "Christian," but have never been born again. But Jesus said in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 20. And another 21% say they are Catholic. Therefore, an astounding 42% claim to be some sort of Christian but they are not born again. And yet they say there is "not a chance" they are going to hell.
 21. Twenty percent of those say there is "no chance" they will end up in hell are of the Jewish faith. Jews do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
 22. And what are we to think about the 26% who say they are not religious, but "spiritual"? These deluded folks do not think they are going to hell.
 23. Surveys like this remind us that there is little fear of God in America today.

III. JUDGMENT WAS INEVITABLE (1:10-16).

1. There are many lessons to be learned from the book of Jeremiah.
2. First of all, the book of Jeremiah emphasizes the sovereignty of God, i.e., God has control over the nations of earth (1:10).
3. The book of Jeremiah not only deals with God's judgment upon Judah, but also upon all the nations -- Babylon, Egypt, Philistia, Tyre, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the nations.
4. Psalm 9:17 says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
5. The book of Jeremiah is a warning about backsliding. The words "backsliding" and "backslidings" occur thirteen times. The word is found only four other times in the Old Testament, once in Proverbs and three times in Hosea.
6. Jeremiah warns that those who persist in turning away from God must face His judgment (2:19).

CONCLUSION:

1. Benjamin Franklin wrote April 17, 1787, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters."
2. With all of our immorality and corruption, can America truly be called a "virtuous people" in the year 2011?
3. How much time does America have left?
4. Unless America repents and turns back to God, it will soon be all over for our nation.
5. America needs revival, and revival will not come unless Christians stop playing church, and start praying.
6. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).